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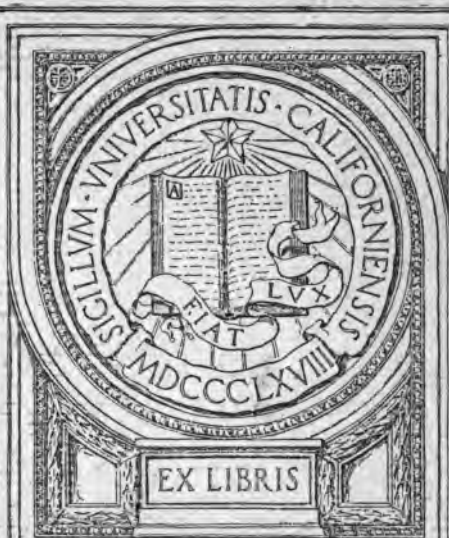
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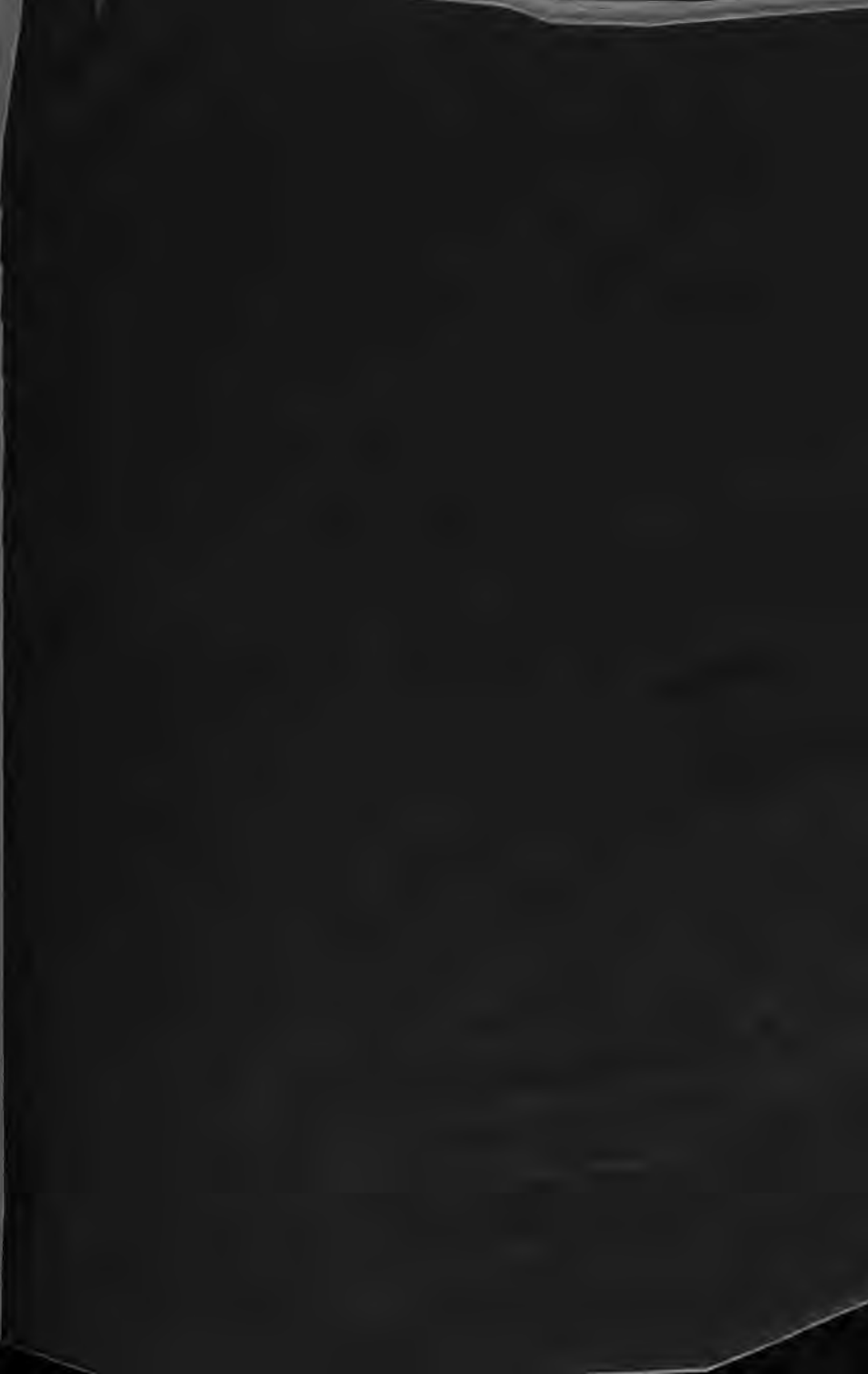
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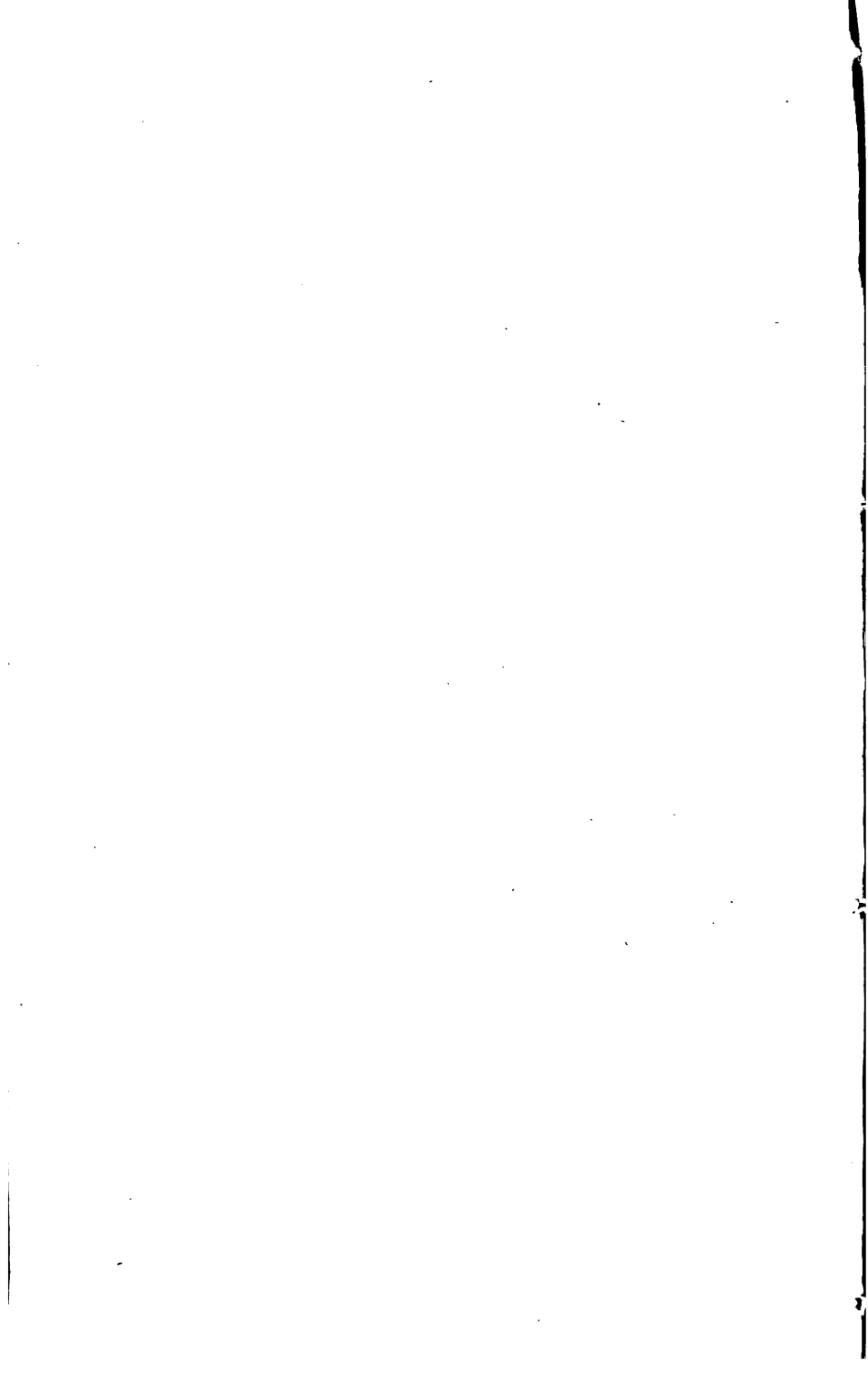
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PERSIA—ANCIENT AND MODERN



PERSIA—ANCIENT & MODERN

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

BY

JOHN PIGGOT, F.S.A., F.G.S., F.R.G.S.

“ L'HISTOIRE N'EST QUE LE TABLEAU DES CRIMES ET DES MALHEURS.”—
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HENRY S. KING & Co.

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G. E. P.

PREFACE.

THE recent visit of the Shah, coupled with the concession to Baron Reuter, has caused public attention to be directed to Persia. Its position in relation to our Indian Empire and Russia makes it additionally essential for intelligent persons to understand clearly its history, resources, features, and political importance.

In the great dearth of general historical and descriptive works on the country, this volume has been compiled to meet—however imperfectly—the demand for information respecting the land of the Shah. Books of Persian travels there are in plenty, from that of Chardin to those of Mounsey and Brittlebank; but most of these are difficult to obtain. Sir John Malcolm's valuable *History* terminates in 1814, and no work of that character has since been published.

It has been the design of the Author to give sufficient historical details from the best authorities, to enable the reader to gain a fair general view of ancient* and modern Persian history, supplemented by chapters on the religion, literature, commerce, arts, sciences, army, education, language, sport, etc., of the country. In the chapter on travelling he has endeavoured carefully to describe the routes to the country, its climate, roads, modes of conveyance, and other details necessary to be known by the traveller, in order that those who intend to go there may be easily enabled to benefit by the experience of others.

With regard to the orthography of names of persons and places, such diversity exists †—even among experts—that it

* About two hundred and fifty-four monarchs have reigned over Persia. Lord Brougham notices the frequent change of dynasty there, observing that in France there were only three dynasties from Charlemagne to Louis XVI., in England but six in the same period. In Persia during those ten centuries there were thirteen (*Political Philosophy*, I. 1846). It is interesting to remember that the area of ancient Persia at the time of its prosperity (from B.C. 506 to 479) was 2,000,000 of square miles, or more than half modern Europe. It was thus eight times as large as the Babylonian Empire at its greatest extent, and probably four times as large as the Assyrian (Rawlinson's *Five Great Monarchies*, III. 84). Modern Persia has an area of about 500,000 square miles, and is therefore two and a half times larger than France.

† Take, for example, the name of the present Shah, thus variously spelt Nâsir-ud-deen (Binning); Nasreddeen (Mounsey); Nasr-ul-Din, Nausserood-deen, Nasser-ud-deen (Townsend's *Manual of Dates*); Nasser-ed-deen (R. Grant Watson); Nasiru 'd dîn (Eastwick); Nasr Eddin (*Russian Official*

is difficult to discover the correct spelling. The endeavour has been to avoid a display of pedantry on the one hand and freedom on the other.

A copious list of authorities is given, to enable those who wish to study the subject further,* and for this purpose also references are given in the foot-notes scattered throughout the volume.

JOHN PIGGOT.

BURLINGTON FINE ARTS CLUB,

March, 1874.

Gazette); Nassr-ed-Din (French paper, *Débats*); Nusser-ood-deen (*Times leader*); Nasr-ood-Deen (Ussher); Nasr-ed-Deen (*Quarterly Review*); and Nassr-ed-Din (*Illustrated Review*, etc.). At the Author's request, Mirza Petros-Khan, the Persian Imperial Commissioner at the Vienna Exhibition, wrote down the Shah's name, adding yet another form to the list, Naser-el-Din Schah !

* The best books on travel published in this century are those of Messrs. Fowler, Binning, Lady Sheil, Mounsey, and Brittlebank.

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* Reprinted by Murray, 1861.

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* This work was given the author by the Persian Commissioner, at the Vienna Exhibition. To it he is indebted for much valuable information.

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THE early or legendary history of Persia is very obscure, chiefly from an absence of dates in the writings of the old Persian historians. It is sufficient for our present purpose to note that, after forming part of the great Assyrian empire, it became a portion of the kingdom of the Medes from B.C. 709 to B.C. 560, when Cyrus made the country independent, and on the death of Astyages, the Median king, annexed his country to Persia. One of the greatest acts of Cyrus was his capture of Babylon, B.C. 538, by diverting the waters of the Euphrates from their course, and marching up the bed of the stream, while Daniel was reading the mystic handwriting on the wall, to the terror of Belshazzar. Then it was that mighty Babylon, "the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' excellency"—as Isaiah calls it—fell before her great foe.

At this period it is considered that Zoroaster, the great Persian religious reformer, flourished, and established fire-worship in the country. Cyrus died B.C. 529, and twelve years afterwards the inhabitants of Babylon, little liking the degradation of their once proud city to a merely provincial one, revolted, and, thanks to their strong walls, for twenty months resisted the efforts of Gushtasp, the Darius Hystaspes of the Greeks. But at last Babylon fell, and Darius ordered the walls to be razed to the ground. Cambyeses succeeded Cyrus as King of Persia, and his reign was distinguished by the annexation of Egypt, that ancient kingdom being conquered B.C. 595.

In 513 Macedonia acknowledged the growing power of Persia, but the latter was soon to measure her strength with the then most important European state, and the tide of Persian conquest was not long destined to remain unchecked. The field of Marathon, B.C. 490, decided the fate of Athens. Instead of being overcome by the Persian hosts, the Athenians rolled back the hitherto unconquered Persians, and, only losing 192 men, inflicted a loss on the enemy of more than 6000. It was an important struggle between Europe and the East, and it is impossible to over-estimate the bravery of this little host of 11,000 men—1000 of which were contributed in gratitude for past services by the state of Plataea in Boeotia—who under Miltiades achieved this great victory. But the Persians retired only to return a few years after (B.C. 480), again to be defeated in a series of engagements, which ended in their being driven from Europe. At first the Persians were successful. Imagine a host which Herodotus states at five millions—a great exaggeration, of course—commanded by

Xerxes, the successor of Darius, marching against such a combination of small states as Greece! The naval victory of Salamis by the Greeks, followed by those of Mycale and Plataea, heralded by the stand made by 300 Spartans in the pass of Thermopylae, induced the invaders to retire, and Persian influence in Europe ceased for ever.*

Bitterly mortified, Xerxes became extremely cruel to his subjects, and made his rule so intolerable that he was murdered B.C. 464. Artaxerxes, who married the Jewess Esther, succeeded. He was the third son of Xerxes, and gained the throne by murdering his brother Darius. In 449 a peace was concluded between Greece and Persia. Artaxerxes was killed in 425, and from this to 401 we have no event of any great importance (except, perhaps, the declaration of independence by Egypt), when the great retreat of the Ten Thousand calls for notice. The younger brother of Artaxerxes II., Cyrus, called the Younger, disputed the throne with him. Ten thousand Greeks accompanied his army, which force was defeated at the battle of Cunaxa, B.C. 401. The Greeks, it is hardly necessary to say, were commanded by Xenophon, and the gallant band accomplished their retreat from the field of battle of 3465 miles in fifteen months. The ancients call this the return of the Cyreian Greeks, and the perils of the journey are well described by Xenophon in his *Anabasis*.

The Greeks soon had their revenge, for Agesilaus, King of Sparta, led an army into Persia, and gained some considerable victories. This occurred from B.C. 396 to B.C. 394, but their presence being required by troubles at home, both sides were glad to conclude the peace of Antalcidas, Persia

* See Appendix A. for results of this expedition.

even getting Cyprus and the Greek colonies of Asia Minor. In 359 Artaxerxes III. signalized his accession to the throne by murdering, in a most wholesale manner, his relations and great nobles of whom he was suspicious. His career terminated in a like tragic manner in 338, when Bagoas poisoned him and many of his family. This wretch placed a son of Darius, Arses by name, on the throne, but murdered him two years after. He then elevated to the monarchy another scion of that house, as Darius III. (336-30), and we are happy to relate that one of his first acts was to order the death of this vile Persian "king-maker."

In the very year in which Darius ascended the throne of Persia, Alexander the Great, at the age of twenty, succeeded his father Philip in the kingdom of Macedonia. Philip had raised that little state from a very distressed condition, to the second most powerful kingdom of the world. His great son lost no time in carrying out those vast schemes which he had been revolving in his mind while he was a pupil of Lysimachus. He had long seen how weak Persia really was, though first among the kingdoms, and knew that the various provinces or satrapies, would readily acknowledge him as conqueror after one or two decisive victories; for these separate portions were so different in manners, language, and feeling, that they were not likely so to unite as to effectually resist a conqueror like Alexander. Therefore from the time he crossed the Hellespont, in 334—at the age of twenty-two, burning for conquest—to the battle of Arbela, three years after, his progress was one continual scene of victory. And not of victory alone, for Alexander never forgot to introduce the civilization of Greece

wherever he went, so that, as Sir E. Creasy, in his *Fifteen decisive Battles of the World*, says (p. 59), "within thirty years after Alexander crossed the Hellespont the language, the literature, and the arts of Hellas, enforced and promoted by the arms of semi-Hellenic Macedon, predominated in every country from the shores of that sea to the Indian waters. . . . It is not to be supposed that this victory of the Greek tongue was so complete as to exterminate the Coptic, the Syrian, the Armenian, the Persian, or the other languages of the numerous nations and tribes between the Ægean, the Iaxertes, the Indus, and the Nile: they survived as provincial dialects. Each probably was in use as the vulgar tongue of its own district; but every person with the slightest pretence to education spoke Greek. Greek was universally the state language and the exclusive language of all literature and science. It formed also for the merchant, the trader, and the traveller, as well as for the courtier, the government official, and the soldier, the organ of intercommunication among the myriads of mankind inhabiting these large portions of the Old World."

Sir Edward goes on to say, "Whether the old Persian empire, which Cyrus founded, could have survived much longer than it did, even if Darius had been victorious at Arbela, may safely be disputed. That ancient dominion, like the Turkish at the present time, laboured under every cause of decay and dissolution. The satraps, like the modern pachas, continually rebelled against the central power, and Egypt, in particular, was almost always in a state of insurrection against its nominal sovereign. There was no longer any effective central control or any internal principle of unity fused through the huge mass of the

empire and binding it together. Persia was evidently about to fall; but had it not been for Alexander's invasion of Asia she would most probably have fallen beneath some other Oriental power, as Media and Babylon had formerly fallen before herself, and as, in the after times, the Parthian supremacy gave way to the revived ascendancy of Persia in the East, under the sceptres of the Arsacidæ." In fact, the Persians of that day were a very different race from their ancestors, the highland tribes, who formerly inhabited the north-east portion of the country. When those hardy people left their mountains and descended into the plains, they soon exchanged their simplicity for luxury, which always, sooner or later, brings the downfall of a nation.

Alexander never thought of defeat, and consequently rarely made any preparations, the want of which he would have felt had a retreat been necessary. For example, as Napoleon points out, "Alexander deserves the glory which he has enjoyed for so many centuries, and among all nations; but what if he had been beaten at Arbela, having the Euphrates, the Tigris, and the desert in his rear, without any strong places of refuge, 900 leagues from Macedonia?" Let us now note the progress of his Persian conquests.

Memnon, the Greek, commanded the Persian force which disputed his passage of the Granicus in 334. Besides the Persian force, Memnon had 20,000 Greek mercenaries, while Alexander's whole army did not number more than 30,000 infantry and 5000 horse. Having passed the river—which was in many places very deep—and routed the opposing forces, he pushed on to Sardis, Ephesus, and Miletus, which he soon took. Memnon had thrown himself into Halicarnassus, but he set it on fire and retreated. He

sent home for reinforcements, and took up winter quarters at Sardis.

The spring of 333 found him marching through Capadocia to the plains of Cilicia, and in November of the same year the great Persian army under Darius met him near Issus. The Persian commander certainly had the worst position; but then, his host consisted of 600,000 men. Darius does not seem to have been possessed of much courage, for directly he saw the battle was going against him, instead of attempting, by an exhibition of personal courage, to re-animate his troops, he fled the field as rapidly as swift steeds could take him.* And now the Persian camp was plundered by the conquerors, but Alexander commanded that every attention should be shown to the family of Darius. It seems that when his progress and success in arms was sufficiently rapid, Alexander was a kind and magnanimous conqueror; but his treatment of the inhabitants of Thebes in 335 and the Syrian in 332 showed that those who opposed him effectively would feel his vengeance. Tyre, a place admirably situated to sustain a siege, detained him seven months; but he had his revenge, for when the "metropolis of the commerce of the world" fell under the efforts of the besiegers, the city was ruthlessly sacked, and thousands of the inhabitants massacred.

Alexander then conquered Egypt, and was prepared in 331 to meet the forces, which, in the meanwhile, Darius had collected. As an instance of his usual policy with conquered nations, we should mention that he respected the national

* Arrian, the Greek historian, says that the Persian loss at Issus was at least 110,000.

rites of Egypt, hallowed by centuries of observance, and did not attempt to supersede them. Darius was anxious for peace, and offered him, besides a vast sum for the release of his family, all the provinces west of the Euphrates. But Alexander was determined to subdue Persia and conquer India, and rejecting his opponent's proposal, he pushed on for the position on the left bank of the Tigris which he believed occupied by the Persian hosts. Darius desired to secure a position in which his cavalry could manœuvre, and accordingly selected a large plain between the Tigris and the mountains of Kurdistan. The battle there fought has received the name of Arbela, though that town was twenty miles distant, the nearest place was really the little village of Gangamela.

At the end of September, 331, Alexander came within sight of the Persian hosts, and imposing the display must have been. Darius had about 40,000 horse and myriads of infantry, while Alexander could only muster 40,000 foot and 7000 horse. The army of Darius was stronger both in point of numbers and warlike qualities of the soldiers than that which Alexander had defeated at Issus; for the Persian king knew that this was his last chance, and he spared no pains to collect soldiers from all parts of his vast dominions, and not forgetting the brave mountaineers of Affghanistan and Bokhara, the Kurd and Turkoman horsemen. When we think of the vast numerical superiority of the Persians and their selected position, we are lost in wonder that the little army of Alexander should have routed such a host. It is not our intention to describe that battle which on October 1, 331, decided the fate of Persia, and the consequent establishment of the Macedonian supremacy

throughout the world. Suffice it to say that all Alexander's bravery and military skill were requisite to make up for the numerical inferiority of his forces. Though at first Darius had well directed the efforts of his army, his courage, as at Issus, gave way, and his flight decided the fate of the day. Alexander, of course, wished to secure the person of the Persian king, and pursued Darius to Arbela. He escaped his conqueror only to fall by the treacherous hand of his satrap Bessus. The subsequent years of Alexander belong to Persian history, and we may therefore describe the remaining acts of the great drama of his life.

Soon after the battle of Arbela Alexander entered Babylon, the city opening its gates to him without any resistance. As in Egypt, the conqueror made himself very popular by not subverting the religion of the inhabitants. He did more than this, he restored to the people the beloved rites of the worship of Belus, and renovated the great temple of that deity. With short-sighted policy the Persians had forbidden the exercise of the Chaldæan religion, and had been cordially hated thereby. Alexander was glad to find in the city the treasures and objects of art which had been carried away from Greece by Xerxes, and these he now sent back whence they came. He did not remain long in Babylon, but advanced to Perseopolis,* where he took an immense treasure, said to amount to about thirty millions sterling. We will not enter into the disputed question, whether he, with his own hand, fired the ancient palace. It is more pleasant to think of his visiting the tomb of Cyrus there. After subduing the northern provinces of Persia and defeating the Scythians, he crossed the Indus early in the summer of

* See Appendix B.

327. The Indian king, Porus, was ready with a large force to fight him; and after he had defeated him, Alexander was so pleased with his bravery in the field and with his conduct when taken, that he allowed him to continue in his kingdom. Alexander, after overrunning the Punjaub, wished to pass the Ganges, but his troops refused, at which it is said the great monarch wept.

In 326 he sailed down the Indus, which expedition lasted several months. Part of the succeeding year was passed at Susa, where the army had a well-deserved rest. The king now tried to induce his soldiers to marry Persian women, hoping thereby to strengthen the unity of his empire. This they did in considerable numbers, but when he wished to receive Asiatics into the army, the Greeks murmured greatly, and it needed all Alexander's tact to accomplish his designs. Early in 324 the king and his victorious host entered Babylon, and the mighty monarch now turned his attention to the conquest of Arabia. He seemed now to have discarded the simple habits of a soldier, and indulged too much in wine. This brought on a fever, and on June 28th of the following year he died. The period he spent in Babylon allowed him, however, to enjoy some of the sweets of conquest, in receiving at his great capital the kings of conquered nations, who came to do him homage.

* We must not forget that one great result of Alexander's conquests was the spread of geographical knowledge, for he always took care to have a staff of competent men in his train, who systematically surveyed the various countries traversed by his armies. Until his expedition into India, little or nothing was known of that country in Europe.*

* See Appendix C.

On the death of Alexander, in 323, his great general, Seleucus Nicator, who had seized the sovereignty of Syria, took possession of Persia, founding the dynasty of the Seleucidæ. Seleucus, the most distinguished of Alexander's generals, and the last of his four great captains, was assassinated in B.C. 280, and his successors, the Seleucidæ, were not sufficiently powerful to retain their possessions. About the year 250, therefore, the Parthian kingdom was founded, under whose dominion the Persians passed. The first Parthian king of Persia was Arsaces, and the next thirty kings form the dynasty of the Arsacidæ. In the reign of one of the monarchs of this house, Orodes I. (B.C. 54—37), the first war with Rome took place. This was in 53, and Surena, the Parthian general, took Crassus, the Roman, prisoner, and put him to death. The valour of the Parthian troops greatly astonished the Romans, who did not understand being beaten. It should be mentioned that during the time that Persia was under this Parthian dominion the Persians are frequently called Parthians, which is very confusing.* The Romans were again defeated in the reign of Phraates IV. (B.C. 36), when Marc Antony was obliged to make a hasty retreat from Parthia, having lost a great part of his army. A peace was concluded some years later, though after the death of Phraates (A.D. 4) war was renewed. These wars greatly weakened the Parthian kingdom, and culminated in the capture, in 198, two years after the conquest of Byzantium, of Ctesiphon, the capital of the empire. This fine city was the winter residence of the Parthian

* Sir R. Kerr Porter, in his *Travels* (I. 306), says "Parthia Proper was a very small tract lying east of Khorassan. So much more has the spirit of a people than their numbers to do with making them a name and gaining them possessions."

kings, and Septimus Severus carried thence 100,000 prisoners.

It was not to be expected that in such a state of affairs Parthia could long retain Persia in subjection. Accordingly we find that, twenty-eight years after the sacking of Ctesiphon, Artaxerxes Bebegan, or Ardshir, a shepherd's son, who had gained some experience of men and military affairs at the court of King Ardavan, raised the standard of revolt. From 226 to 242 Artaxerxes, the founder of the dynasty of the Sassanides, held the reins of power, and delighted the Persians by re-establishing the Magian faith. Under this native dynasty Persia flourished, and it was ever the endeavour of the monarch to enlarge the empire, until it was as large as that ruled over by Cyrus.

Respecting his veneration for Zoroaster, we may remark that he summoned the Magi, or priests of that faith, from all parts, for only a corrupted form of that worship had been permitted under the late dynasty, and they came to the number of 80,000. The main tenets of this pure form of the religion of Zoroaster consisted in the belief in the All-Good, whose habitation was the kingdom of Light, and an evil being, who resided in a kingdom of Darkness. The names of these two beings were respectively Ormazd and Ahriman, and the true believer was instructed so to conduct himself that he might be eternally happy hereafter with Ormazd, instead of inhabiting the kingdom of the Prince of Darkness. Fire, light, and the sun were revered, if not worshipped, as symbols of the Divine nature. The Magian priests were a powerful body, and gathered their maintenance from the faithful. In the *Sadder*, or *Book*, of that religion is this passage: "Though your good works exceed

in number the leaves of the trees, the drops of rain, the stars in the heaven, or the sands on the sea-shore, they will all be unprofitable to you, unless they are accepted by the destour, or priest. To obtain the acceptation of this guide to salvation you must faithfully pay him tithes of all you possess, of your goods, of your lands, and of your money. If the destour be satisfied, your soul will escape hell tortures; you will secure praise in this world and happiness in the next." The *Zendavesta*, another work containing the maxims of Zoroaster, has descended, or rather a part of it, to our times. It is believed to have been compiled about the time of the establishment of the religion, in 226. The Abbé Foucher says it "bears exactly the same reference to the books of Zoroaster as our missals and breviaries do to the Bible." * Here is an admirable maxim from this work: "He who sows the ground with care and diligence acquires a greater stock of religious merit than he could gain by the repetition of ten thousand prayers." † Toleration was not one of the articles of this religion, and as soon as Artaxerxes had established himself firmly on the throne, a persecution of other religionists commenced under the direction of the Magi.

Some of the most powerful satraps under the late *régime* had been allowed to assume the title of king. Though Artaxerxes had taken the title of Shah-in-Shah, or King of kings, on his accession, he saw the impolicy of allowing his own subjects to affect the regal appellation. He visited all his provinces in person, and severely punished those who rebelled against his authority. After he had set in order the

* *Nineveh and Perseopolis*, by W. S. W. Vaux, p. 111.

† Quoted by Gibbon in his *Decline and Fall*, I. 222.

internal economy of the kingdom, the Great King (for so he liked to be termed) turned his attention to foreign conquest, and, as a preliminary step towards the re-occupation by Persia of the countries formerly governed by Cyrus, sent an embassy, consisting of 400 of the flower of his army, to Alexander Severus commanding the Romans to evacuate Asia. To such a request only one answer could be sent, and both nations prepared for war. A great battle was fought, and the Persians were routed—at least, so Alexander told his senate. Gibbon, with a great deal of probability, throws doubt upon his statements, and thinks that instead of any great victory being obtained, “this blaze of imaginary glory was designed to conceal some real disgrace.” For in that oration he describes the Persian force as including 120,000 horse, clothed in steel armour, 700 elephants and 1800 scythe-armed chariots. The exaggeration—if not absolute falsity—of this statement is apparent when we remember that at Arbela Darius had only 40,000 horse and 200 armed chariots, and that Antiochus could only bring 54 elephants into the field against the Romans. Herodianus, a contemporary historian, tells us that the Romans suffered very much in this campaign, but it is certain that the Persian losses were very considerable.

Nevertheless Persia owed a debt of gratitude to him who established her independence, and Artaxerxes, dying in 242, bequeathed his ambitious projects to his son Sapor, or Shahpoor. That Artaxerxes was well versed in the laws of political economy appears from one of his sayings quoted by Gibbon: “The authority of the prince must be defended by a military force; that force can only be maintained by taxes; all taxes must at last

fall upon agriculture; and agriculture can never flourish, except under the protection of justice and moderation." * Sapor (242—73) continued the Roman war. He conquered Armenia, and the Romans were so angry at this, that Valerian himself marched to the frontier to prevent his further progress. A battle was fought near Edessa in 260, when the Romans were defeated with great loss. Sapor induced Valerian to come to a private interview, and then rewarded his trust by taking him prisoner. The emperor was treated with the greatest indignity, and soon died.† Sapor crossed the Euphrates and surprised Antioch, and the sack of Tarsus and Cæsarea rapidly followed. He treated the inhabitants of these wealthy cities with the greatest cruelty. Towards the latter end of his reign, Aurelian, who had been a distinguished general before he assumed the imperial purple, retrieved to some extent the glory of the Roman arms. The contest of two brothers, Narses and Hormuz, for the Persian throne resulted in the elevation of the former. It was his good fortune to inflict a signal defeat on the Romans, under Galerius, in 296, on the plains of Mesopotamia, in the very place in which Crassus had been defeated many years before. The Emperor Diocletian, who was at Antioch, was very angry with his general; but at the request of Galerius he was allowed to try his fortune again, and in the succeeding year gained a complete victory over the Persians, who had been rendered careless by their former success. Peace was then concluded on the following terms: that the river Araxes should form the

* D'Herbelot, *Bibliothèque Orientale*, au mot *Ardschir*.

† Gibbon (*Decline and Fall*, I. 301) says that so little has been preserved of Persian history before Mohammed, that the modern Persians are totally ignorant of the victory of Sapor.

boundary between the monarchies, and that Mesopotamia and five provinces beyond the Tigris should be ceded to Rome. The most important of these was Carduene, the ancient seat of the Carduchians. Tiridates was restored to the throne of Armenia, and until his death, forty years after, Persia and Rome were at peace, and the resources of the country developed in consequence.

War again broke out in the reign of Sapor the Great, the grandson of Narses (337—63), on the decease of Constantine, in 337. The Persians now thought this would be a favourable opportunity to regain their lost provinces, but, first of all, the affairs of Armenia occupied their attention. About this time Tiridates, after a reign of fifty-six years, died. He had been converted to the Christian faith, and was a firm ally of Rome. There were, however, many distinguished persons in his dominions who refused to embrace Christianity, and these formed a powerful party, who supplicated the assistance of Sapor. The country was in a state of anarchy and confusion for three years after the death of Tiridates; but at the expiration of that time an officer named Antiochus placed Chosroes, the son of the late monarch, on the throne. Sapor connived at this proceeding, for the new monarch was a youth, weak in body and mind, who preferred ease and luxury to the glory of war. Sapor promised to leave him in peace if he would yield up the province of Atropatene, and pay an annual tribute. Nine battles were fought in the reign of Sapor, between the Persians and Romans. At the battle of Singara (348) the latter sustained a signal defeat, though at first a victory on their part seemed assured. Constantius commanded in person. A portion of the army of Sapor fled across the plain, pur-

sued by the Romans, who then plundered the Persian camp. Sapor kept the principal part of his army in reserve, and when night came on and the Romans were still occupied in the camp, he advanced, and routed them with ease. It should be mentioned that Constantius had in vain attempted to prevent his troops from pursuing the Persians in the plain, until victory was more certain. Sapor had long wished to possess the powerful city of Nisibis, at the foot of Mount Masius, and had already made two unsuccessful attempts to take it by storm. He now marched against it a third time. But though he diverted the course of the river Mygdonius, so as to form an artificial lake on which his soldiers could reach the walls in a more effective manner, he was obliged to relinquish the siege and defend the eastern frontier of Persia against the Massagetæ. After this, peace was concluded with Rome.

When, about the year 358, the Roman troops were engaged on the Danube, Sapor thought it would be a good time to invade the provinces of the East. He collected a large army, crossed the Tigris by a bridge of boats, and passed into the plain of Mesopotamia. Lack of forage, etc., compelled him to turn towards the head of the Euphrates. Unhappily for his original design, he laid siege to the city of Amida, or Diarbekir, expecting to take it in a short time. The place was stronger, however, than he thought, and for seventy-three days his forces were detained before it, and his losses were so great that he was obliged to return to his capital.* His allies fell off, and the next year his energies were expended in

* Ammianus Marcellinus, the historian, witnessed the defence of this town, and has left us a detailed account of the siege.

the sieges of Singara and Bezabde, two Mesopotamian cities.

The death of Constantius, in 360, placed Julian the Apostate on the throne. The simplicity of his habits and the justice of his deeds have not received the genuine admiration they deserve, on account of the brand of apostasy. One thing he did which we at least should appreciate,—he granted absolute freedom of worship to all his subjects, though his sympathies were with the pagans. Eight months after his accession, having defeated many who were in arms against the Roman empire, he determined to impress the Persians with a sense of the power of Rome. He soon arrived at Antioch, where he was obliged to remain until the ensuing spring. His simple habits, and those which he encouraged in his courtiers, were very unpopular in such a pleasure-loving city. He was therefore very glad when it was time to leave Antioch for his campaign, by way of Beræa and Batuæ, to Hierapolis (the sacred city), a convenient rendezvous for his troops. These soon crossed the Euphrates, and, detaching a considerable force to devastate Media and Adiabene, he pushed on with the remainder, pretending to go towards Nisibis, but really marching along the banks of the Euphrates for ninety miles to Circesium. He had about 60,000 good soldiers with him, and a well-appointed fleet accompanied the army. Passing the river Chaboras, Julian entered Persia, and, after crossing arid plains and then a more cultivated district in a march of three hundred miles, reached Macepracta. Through the rich province of Assyria the army marched, leaving desolation in its course, until having reduced the city of Perisabor and the fortress of Masgamalcha, Ctesiphon,

the capital of Persia, was gained. We should rather say its neighbourhood was reached, and the passage of the Tigris needed all the resolution of the Roman commander. A Persian force assembled on the other side was defeated, but Julian, in deference to the opinion of a council of war, decided not to besiege Ctesiphon. A Persian of high rank deserted to the Roman camp for the express purpose of betraying those he pretended to befriend. He it was who suggested to Julian to destroy his fleet, and when this had been done his retreat was impossible.

All this time, though Sapor had not been encountered, he was by no means idle. The inhabitants of various towns and villages so cordially co-operated with him, that they devastated the country between the Tigris and the mountains of Media, whither the invaders now marched, so that the Romans were without means of subsistence. It was now impossible to proceed, and, hoping to reach the province of Corduene, a retreat was ordered. But the Persian forces followed Julian closely, harassing him and inflicting great loss at every turn. Of course the Romans fought bravely, and the Persian losses were not inconsiderable, but the latter fought at great advantage upon their own ground and with a retreating foe. On one occasion Julian rushed out to repel sudden attack, and had not time to put on his armour. The engagement was very severe, and he was mortally wounded by a javelin. His dying oration has been preserved by Ammianus. In it he said: "I now offer my tribute of gratitude to the Eternal Being, who has not suffered me to perish by the cruelty of a tyrant, by the secret dagger of conspiracy, or by the slow tortures of lingering disease. He has given me, in the midst of an honourable

career, a splendid and glorious departure from this world ; and I hold it equally absurd, equally base, to solicit or to decline the stroke of fate.” * The question now was, who should be his successor, and Jovian, the chief of the household, very popular with the soldiers, was elected. The retreat continued, and in two or three days Samara, about one hundred miles from Ctesiphon, was reached. Sapor now offered peace, and negotiations took place. These the Persians delayed until the Roman provisions were nearly exhausted, and it was agreed that hostilities should cease on the cession by Rome of the five provinces beyond the Tigris : the kingdom of Armenia, the city of Nisibis, and the castle of Singara. To those terms Jovian agreed, and Persia, in 363, thus gained the territory which had been ceded by Sapor’s grandfather.

Sapor now marched into Armenia to punish the king for his conduct in the late war. Tyranus was killed, and his kingdom became a Persian province. The Romans, under the Emperor Valens, supported his son Para in his claim to the throne ; the Persians favoured Aspacuras, and this difference led to dissension between the two nations, which did not, however, last long. Sapor died soon after, at the age of seventy years, leaving his kingdom in great prosperity, which continued during the reigns of his three successors. We should mention that the reign of Yezdijird I. (401—21) was chiefly distinguished for religious disturbances. The king was quite inclined to tolerate the Christians in his dominions, which grievously offended the Magi ; but when that king died his son gained great popularity among them by a cruel persecution of the followers

* Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, III. 254.

of Christ. This king was Baharam V. (or Vahranes), and when he had as he thought crushed the Christians, he had plenty to do to repel an invasion of the Turks of Trans-Oxiana. He was in war one of the bravest monarchs who have ever occupied the throne of Persia, and his exploits have been a favourite theme with Persian chroniclers. Nine years after the death of Yezdijird I. Perozes made an expedition against the white Huns. These were settled on the fertile plains of Sogdiana, on the eastern side of the Caspian, and received their name *white* from the change in their complexion, which took place when they became more civilized. Their ancestors had been a terror to the Chinese. At the time of which we are speaking the Huns had made important conquests in India, and were greatly distinguished for their military skill. The impetuous Perozes found himself by superior strategy caught in a trap. He was taken prisoner, and only purchased his life by a humiliating ceremony of adoration to his conqueror. As soon as he was able he renewed the attack, and was defeated and killed.

For twelve years Persia was torn by rival factions, until 500, when the son of the last-mentioned monarch, Cabades (or Kobad), restored it to something like tranquillity. In 502, because Anastasius I. would not pay him tribute, he declared war with the Roman empire. He began to ravage Armenia and Mesopotamia. Amida held out for three months, and 50,000 Persian soldiers fell during the siege. For three years the frontier continued to be devastated, and then Cabades agreed to sell his conquests for a large sum. But to prevent such conduct on the part of the Persians again, Anastasius founded a strong colony at Dara, about fourteen miles from Nisibis, and the important fortifications

there were subsequently strengthened by Justinian. Civil dissensions disturbed the reign of Cabades, or he would have accomplished more for the aggrandisement of the country. His third son, Chosroes (or Nushirvan I.), succeeded his father in 531. Cabades, when at war with Rome, mentioned, as a condition of peace, that this, his favourite son, should be adopted by the Emperor Justin. If this could have been carried out, Chosroes, as Gibbon observes, might have acquired a specious claim to the inheritance of his Roman parent.

For forty-eight years Chosroes occupied the throne of Persia, and he was certainly the greatest monarch of the Sassanian dynasty. Success attended his arms, and the Romans thought it best to purchase a peace with such a powerful king. This they accordingly did for eleven thousand pounds of gold. The Romans afterwards gave him some of the spoils of Carthage, which great city was captured by Belisarius in 533, and named Justiniana, after the emperor. Peace did not, however, continue long. Both the Arsacides of Armenia and the Gothic ambassadors of Vitiges persuaded him that Justinian aspired to be the sole master of the world, and his only chance was to invade his dominions while his armies were detained in the West. "Has he not," said they, "violated the privileges of Armenia, the independence of Colchos, and the wild liberty of the Tzanian mountains? Has he not usurped, with equal avidity, the city of Bosphorus on the frozen Mæotus, and the vale of palm-trees on the shores of the Red Sea? The Moors, the Vandals, the Goths have been successively oppressed, and each nation has calmly remained the spectators of their neighbour's ruin." Violating his treaty, the

Persian king assembled his army on the plains of Babylon for the invasion of Syria. Several cities, as Hierapolis, Beræa, and Chalcis, purchased their safety by large sums of money, for Chosroes was in his conquests almost as much distinguished for avarice as love of glory. At Apamea he found a piece of the true Cross, encrusted with gold and gems. After robbing it of the latter, he restored the relic to its former possessors. Antioch did not detain him very long, for though Justinian had enriched it with many beautiful public buildings, it was not a place of great strength. He now turned his thoughts to Palestine, and would soon have taken Jerusalem, and "looted"—to use a recent term—the holy city, but the presence of the Roman general Belisarius obliged him to forego the attempt. Although he did not gain any signal victory at this time over the Persians, he compelled Chosroes to return in the defence of his own country.

Belisarius was soon recalled to Constantinople, but early in the ensuing year he was sent again, and collected his forces at Europus, where his mere presence induced the Persian army rapidly to cross the Euphrates. Troubles nearer home necessitated the return of Belisarius, and 30,000 Romans under fifteen generals were vanquished by about 4000 Persians, while the former were being led through the mountains of Armenia. After this, Chosroes went to prosecute the Colchian or Lazic war. Petra was occupied by the Persians, and in 551 the Roman general Dagistous, with 7000 men, laid siege to it. It really sustained two sieges at this time, for the besiegers were reinforced. At the second siege about 2500 of its gallant defenders perished, and, when the Romans had taken the

place, it was forthwith destroyed. That the Persians were victorious in several battles after this was due to the talent of this general Mermeroes; but when he died, and Nacoragan, a satrap, took his place, they were ignominiously defeated at the engagement of the Phasis. But both sides were tired of the war, and twenty years after the invasion of Syria by the Persians, a truce was concluded. The limits of the two countries remained the same, though Chosroes agreed to renounce his claim to the sovereignty of Colchos. He was actually able to make the Romans pay him an annual tribute of 80,000 pieces of gold. When his ambassadors went to Constantinople they treated the Roman minister with the greatest contempt, or, as Gibbon expresses it, "The successor of Cyrus assumed the majesty of the eastern sun, and graciously permitted his younger brother Justinian to reign over the West, with the pale and reflected splendour of the moon."* But Chosroes undoubtedly made the terror of his arm felt along the Mediterranean, the Euxine, and particularly in India.

Persia was divided into four large vice-royalties, and during this long reign was admirably governed. In this the king was ably seconded by his minister Buzurg-Mihir. Though the commencement of his reign was tarnished by the execution of his elder brothers—we have mentioned that he was only the third son himself—to render his seat on the throne firmer, he so held the reins of government during his long reign as fairly to deserve the appellation of Just, by which he is known in the Persian annals. He revived the code of laws of Artaxerxes I., and, not content to leave the distant parts of his king-

* *Decline and Fall*, V. 418.

dom entirely to his dependants, he frequently visited all portions of his dominions. He was anxious to be considered a patron of literature, and founded a great academy at Gondi Sapor. He had translations made of Greek and Indian works. Among the latter were the moral and political fables of Pilpay, and to get this work he sent his physician to procure a transcript. He delighted to hold theological disputations, in which the professors of rival creeds should explain their various tenets. When he came to the throne, the people were much led away by a fanatic named Mazdak, the chief features of whose creed were the community of lands and women. The late king had rather favoured this new teacher, and had allowed him and his followers, a numerous body, to seize valuable lands under their very convenient creed. The young king made them disgorge these, to the great content of the sensible portion of the nation. The established religion of the country was that of the Magi.

Until the reign of Chosroes the silk used by the Romans came from China through Persia. It is extraordinary that before this period no attempt should have been made to disturb the monopoly of the Persian merchants, who braved the danger of the desert, on account of the immense gains which awaited the appearance of this substance in the Roman market. It is interesting to remember that the Greeks of Alexander the Great's army were the first to bring silk into Europe. Tiberius forbade men to wear it, and Heliogabalus (A.D. 218—22) was the first man who wore a robe entirely made of it. When imported in a manufactured state, the fabric was frequently picked to pieces and then re-woven, threads of cotton, etc., being

introduced, to render it less expensive. Justinian, in the reign of Chosroes, wished to get for Rome the wealth which accrued to the merchants who carried on the silk trade. He did not revive the old Red Sea traffic, but applied to the *Æthiopians* of Abyssinia to help him. They replied that they could not assist him, when, just in the nick of time, two Persian monks came from China, as there was a Christian mission there, and offered to bring some silk-worms from that country to Constantinople. Justinian cordially embraced their offer, and in 551 they brought a number of the eggs, concealed in a hollow cane. These were soon hatched, and in process of time silk was produced there in large quantities, and a lucrative manufacture established.

The reign of Hormuz, the son of Chosroes (579—90), is chiefly noticeable for its disasters. He speedily lost all his father's conquests; the Romans, for example, gained a great victory over his forces at Solaion, in 586, and four years after he was put to death by his exasperated subjects in a popular insurrection. His son, Chosroes II. (590—628), was a very different man from his father. To regain his throne he was obliged to flee from his general Baharam, who had raised the standard of revolt, and ask the assistance of the Romans. This was granted, and Baharam, at the head of 40,000 rebellious Persians, was defeated in battle on the banks of the Zab, on the borders of Media. Persia now seemed almost like a Roman province, and a thousand of the strangers formed the body-guard of the monarch. It must not be supposed that the timely aid of the Emperor Maurice was given for nothing. The Romans received the important cities of Martyropolis and Dara, and they hoped that the Persians would have embraced Chris-

tianity. Chosroes, indeed, listened to the Christian bishops, but it was only to gratify his curiosity, and the Magi were still in the ascendant.

Persia remained friendly with Rome until 602, when Phocas, on the abdication of Maurice, signalized his acquisition of supreme power by the murder of the emperor and all his sons. When this intelligence reached Chosroes, he declared he would avenge the death of the murdered emperor. Narses, who had been instrumental in placing the Persian king on his throne, had the command of the Roman army in the East. Phocas recalled him, but he raised the standard of revolt at Hierapolis, was induced to go to Constantinople by treacherous promises, and was there burnt alive. Without such a leader, the Eastern army was easily defeated by Chosroes, and during the eight years of the reign of Phocas, or until the year 510, Dara, Amida, and Edessa were taken, and the most important Syrian cities, including Antioch. After the conquest of Syria, the Persians took Cæsarea, the capital of Cappadocia; and, after resting his troops in the vale of Damascus, Chosroes was ready for the conquest of Jerusalem. His grandfather had desired to take this city, and now Chosroes II., urged on partly by the Magi and his own love of plunder, advanced to the devoted place. It was carried by assault in 614, this being partly accomplished by the aid of a great number of Jews and Arabs. It is said that 90,000 Christians were massacred; the patriarch Zachariah, and a portion of the true Cross, which Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, had discovered, were carried off into the country of the conqueror.

Chosroes now turned his attention to Egypt, and soon (616) that ancient country succumbed to his power. He

thus restored the Persian empire to its limits under Xerxes, but the Christian provinces he subdued, looked with horror upon the fire-worshippers. We have mentioned that the followers of Zoroaster disclaimed any idolatrous worship of the fire itself, but simply revered it as an emblem of the Deity; but fire-worshippers they appeared to those who could not appreciate, or did not care to investigate, such subtle distinctions. It may be wondered that Heraclius, who had succeeded to the throne in 610, did not attempt ere this to stop the tide of Persian conquest; but he was fully occupied at home. The Avars (also called the Huns of Pannonia), a few months after the Persian occupation of Egypt, menaced the decaying empire. The *chagan* of that people asked Heraclius for an interview near the town of Heraclea. He went with a large following, and during the games which took place the Avars fell upon them, and the emperor and a few followers only returned to Constantinople, saving themselves by rapid flight. Sain, the Persian general, offered to conduct an embassy to Chosroes, but the Persian king said he only wanted the emperor bound in chains, and actually had Sain flayed alive for his conduct. The "great king" agreed not to conquer Constantinople if Heraclius would pay to him yearly 1000 talents of gold, 1000 of silver, 1000 silk robes, and other treasures. The contrast was great, truly, between the king of Persia and the emperor of a once vast empire. The former seemed at the height of prosperity, and, when tired with the conduct of his armies, could retire to his palace at Artemita, about sixty miles north of Ctesiphon, where every luxury that an eastern mind could conceive awaited him. Six thousand guards protected the palace, and the stables were furnished

with the like number of horses and mules. The gorgeous apartments were richly adorned with beautiful hangings, and the pillars supporting the roof were overlaid with gold and silver.

Better had it been for Chosroes if he had treated the Roman emperor with kindness, for now Heraclius, burning with indignation at his treatment—Chosroes had ordered him to relinquish Christianity, and embrace the Persian religion—prepared for war. The clergy cordially co-operated with him, and agreed to lend their church plate and ornaments for his necessities. A tolerably strong force was got together, and when everything was ready, Heraclius embarked his troops and landed them on the confines of Syria, in the gulf of Scanderoon. He pitched his camp near Issus (the scene of Alexander the Great's famous battle) and trained his recruits for the campaign, which he expected would be a severe one. This was about the year 622. The camp was admirably situated for his purpose, as he could watch the proceedings of the enemy, and be concealed himself. So well had the Roman emperor improved his troops by judicious training, that in the very first engagement with the Persians he gained a decided victory. Passing Mount Taurus, and marching through the plains of Cappadocia, he pitched his winter quarters on the bank of the Halys. By the next year he had carried the war far into the enemy's country. Chosroes, who had all this time been ravaging the Roman territories, was obliged to return to Persia, but, having already felt the power of the Roman arms, he advanced cautiously, and at first avoided an engagement. In 626 a large force of Avars and Persians attacked Constantinople, but were repulsed with consider-

able loss. This victory greatly cheered Heraclius in his arduous campaign. Some months of the succeeding year were employed by the Roman emperor in the recovery of the Syrian cities, and he then marched from the Araxes to the Tigris. Chosroes was not idle, but his powerful satrap Sarbar deserted his cause, and then a number of soldiers were withdrawn at the time they were most wanted. The Persian king ordered his general Rhazates to follow the Romans, and bring them to an engagement. This battle took place December 1, 627, near the ruins of the great city of Nineveh, when the Persian general was killed and his army dispersed. On to the beautiful palace of Chosroes, Artemita, which we have before mentioned, the Romans marched, and the spoils they got from it were very great. The lack of courage shown by Chosroes in his last days is very remarkable, considering his former achievements. Nine days before the Romans arrived at his favourite palace he fled to Ctesiphon. He now wished to abdicate in favour of his beloved son Merdaza, but his son Siroes headed a powerful conspiracy, and ordered his father to be placed in a dungeon, where he expired. This was in 628, and a peace was concluded between Siroes and Heraclius, the latter stipulating that the wood of the True Cross should be restored to him. This was made the next year the subject of a magnificent ceremonial, called the Exaltation of the Cross, in which that relic was restored to the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. But the triumph of Heraclius was short-lived, and his pomp, false glitter. He had lost 200,000 soldiers; the Roman provinces had been ravaged during his absence, and the spoils of Persia did not compensate for the immense expenses of the campaign.

When Chosroes II. was in the height of his prosperity, or about the year 617, he received an embassy from a citizen of Mecca, Mohammed by name, asking him to acknowledge him as the prophet of God. His only reply was to tear up the letter. Little did he think that Mohammed was destined to found a powerful kingdom, and that his successors would occupy Persia! At that period Mohammed was about forty-seven years of age, having been born in 570. His father was Abdallah, of the family of Hashem, in the tribe of Koreish, princes of Mecca, and his mother Amina, of the race of the Zahrites, distinguished for their personal beauty. Both his parents died when he was still young, and Mohammed was brought up by his uncle, Abu Taleb, who trained him to commercial pursuits. The journeys he made with his uncle were of great service to him, in storing his mind with information and knowledge of men, to be employed with great effect in after life. When twenty-five years of age he won the heart of Kadijah, a rich widow of Mecca, and for fifteen years he enjoyed great domestic happiness. His devoted wife then died, and he proclaimed to the world that faith on which he had been meditating for many years. It had always been his custom to retire for some time, annually, to the Cave of Hera, near Mecca, and there chiefly the creed of Islam was elaborated. At this time the Arabs worshipped the sun, moon, and stars. They invoked departed spirits, and showed their belief in the resurrection, by leaving a camel to perish on the grave of its master, so that it might be useful to him in another world. Their greatest temple was that in which the Kaaba, or Black Stone of Mecca, was preserved, and the tribe of Koreish—of which, as we have men-

tioned, Mohammed was a member—were the guardians of this holy fane.

About 612 Mohammed prepared the Koran (which means in the original “that which ought to be read”), the Bible of the creed of Islam. It was not, however, published until 634, or two years after his death. Notwithstanding some statements to the contrary, there does not appear to be any evidence to show that Mohammed could read or write. Yet this did not prevent him becoming one of the greatest religious founders—or imposters, as his enemies would have it—the world has ever seen. The key-note of his creed was “there is but one God, and Mohammed is the apostle of God.” There can be no doubt that he borrowed largely from the Bible, and it is remarkable that he should have spoken with so much reverence of the founder of Christianity.* He stated that the Koran was dictated to him by the angel Gabriel at the express command of the Deity, and triumphantly pointed to its matter, as a proof of its supernatural character. We shall probably in another part of this work enter more at length into the tenets of the creed of Islam, we must now glance rapidly at its progress. Mohammed first convinced his wife of his mission, then Ali, the son of Abu Taleb, and his friend Abubekr. The latter induced ten of the chief citizens of Mecca to place themselves under the instruction of the Prophet, and these, moved by his eloquence, were converted.

* In the Koran he says, “Verily Jesus Christ, the son of Mary, is the apostle of God, and his word which he conveyed unto Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from him: honourable in this world and in the world to come; and one of those who approach near to the presence of God.” Gibbon says the Roman Church borrowed the idea of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin from the Koran.

The progress of this faith was at first decidedly slow—fourteen converts represented the labour of three years. But it must be remembered that he had not publicly announced his mission, and wished probably to feel his way and ensure his progress, until he was certain of success. This public announcement he made in 613, and had to endure the ridicule of the citizens. When they saw that this had no effect, harsher measures were employed. The family of Hashem was cut off from all intercourse with the rest of the tribe of Koreish, and a formidable conspiracy was formed to kill him. This conspiracy was made known to Mohammed, and occasioned the famous *Hegira*, or “Flight” from Mecca to Medina. This memorable journey occupied sixteen days, the Prophet being hotly pursued by members of the Koreish tribe. The reason why he selected Medina was this. Some time before some citizens of that city, who had come to pay their devotion at the temple containing the Kaaba, had been converted by the teaching of Mohammed, and had promised him protection, if he ever found it necessary to fly from his native place. Mohammed was installed as prince of Medina, and soon found himself strong enough to advance the interests of Islam with the sword. With great art Mohammed promised Paradise to all who fell on his behalf.* In two battles he defeated his Koreishite opponents, and recaptured Mecca in 630. He declared war upon the Romans soon after Heraclius returned from the successful Persian war,

* The Koran says, “The sword is the key of heaven and of hell: a drop of blood shed in the cause of God, a night spent in arms, is of more avail than two months of fasting or prayer: whoever falls in battle his sins are forgiven: at the day of judgment his wounds shall be resplendent as vermillion and odoriferous as musk, and the loss of his limbs shall be supplied by the wings of angels and cherubim.”

but soon abandoned his project. The great Prophet died in 632, after conquering the whole of Arabia. We must now return to the affairs of Persia; our digression respecting the career of Mohammed will have prepared our readers for the Arabian conquest of the country.

After the death of Chosroes II., in 628, a period of anarchy and confusion ensued in Persia. This lasted until 632, when Yezdijird III. appeared to be firmly seated on the throne. In that year, however, Mohammed died, and Abubekr, the first Caliph, sent Caled with a force which captured the city of Hira, westward of the ruins of Babylon. The war continued with varying fortune until 636, when the battle of Cadesia decided the fate of Persia. The Persian king was only a boy, fifteen years of age, so that it was necessary to entrust the command to an experienced general. Such a one was considered to be found in Rustam, who commanded a force of about 120,000. The Moslems, or Saracens, as they are variously called, could only muster 30,000, but they were far better soldiers. The Persian general, too, was reclining in his tent, when he ought to have been animating his men by his presence, and, as he was flying from the field, was pursued by an Arab and killed. With this battle fell the Sassanian dynasty and the Magian religion. On marched the conquerors through Assyria, and at the junction of the Euphrates and Tigris, the Caliph (Omar) ordered Bassora to be founded, by which their conquest could be the better secured. Ctesiphon remained to be captured, but this important city fell three months after the battle of Cadesia. The riches of the place astonished the conquerors, and even their avarice was satiated with the spoils of the palaces. We should mention that the young

king's subjects made another stand at Nehavend in 641 for the independence of their country, but were again defeated. After the overthrow of this last hope the king fled to the mountains of Farsistan, but was betrayed ten years afterwards to the Saracens.

For more than two hundred years Persia was a province of the empire of the Caliphs. It must be admitted that, on the whole, the sway of the Commander of the Faithful was a beneficial one. But as soon as the Caliphate showed symptoms of decay, efforts were made to establish another rule. The first of these was the Taherite dynasty, founded by Taher in 813; but the most important was the establishment, under Yakoub-ben-Seis, of the Soffaride dynasty, which lasted from 868 to 900. It was called Soffaride, because its founder had been a brazier! We should mention that the Caliphs belonged to the race of the Abbassides, now in their decline. They had seized the sceptre of the Saracens in 750, and were descended from Abbas-ben-Abul-Motaleb, uncle of the Prophet. The Abbassides, not being strong enough to recover Persia, requested the Samanides to come from their country across the Oxus, and do so for the reigning Caliph. With ten thousand horse this hardy people came, and in 874 Ismael, their chief, conquered the Soffarian army, and for about thirty years Persia had no ruler but the Caliph. In 900 the latter allowed Ismael to assume the title of King of Persia, and the dynasty of the Samanides lasted until 936; for in that year—three hundred and four from the death of Mohammed—Persia passed away from Arabian rule.

The dynasty of the Bowides ruled Persia until 1038, when the Seljukian Turks gained possession of the country.

Gibbon says the former dynasty was established by the sword of three brothers, who under various names were styled "the support and the columns of the state, and who from the Caspian Sea to the Ocean would suffer no tyrants but themselves." Nevertheless, he continues, "under their reign the language and genius of Persia revived." The Turkish rule lasted until 1194, when Togrel, the last Seljukian sultan of Persia, was defeated by the Kharizmians, or Carismians, from the borders of the Caspian Sea. The Turks, Turkmans, or Turcomans, had their seat beyond that sea, in the sixth century. After that period they gradually spread themselves over the civilized world. About 1000 years after our Lord, Mahmud, the Gaznevide, governed the eastern provinces of Persia; it was for him that the title of "Sultan" was invented, and his expedition into India gained him great wealth. But a number of tribes, chiefly branches of the Turkomans, had been suffered to settle on the plains of Trans-Oxiana and Carizme. When Mahmud died, his successor, Massond, could not keep them in check, and at the battle of Zendekan he was defeated, and they elected Togrel Bey as their king (the son of Michael, the son of Seljuk), and so the dynasty of Shepherd Kings arose in Persia.

The Mongols, or Moguls, invaded Persia in 1218. Under their great leader, Zingis Khan, first Emperor of the Moguls and Tartars from 1206 to 1227, they ravaged Asia. He created his almost invincible army from hardy pastoral tribes, and ninety stormed cities of China showed the Celestials that they could not defy their new foe with impunity. Mohammed, Sultan of Cariame, who then reigned over Persia, did not tamely submit to the progress of the 700,000 Moguls and Tartars led by Zingis Khan. He did battle against them

with 400,000 soldiers, but was defeated. The Khan himself did not actually penetrate into Persia, for after he had devastated the intervening cities, his troops demanded to return to their native plains. This the Khan reluctantly did, and dying in 1227, Octai, his minister, succeeded him. Persia may be said to have been finally conquered by Holagou Khan (the grandson of Zingis), in 1258. In that year the last Caliph of the house of Abbassides was driven from his throne, Bagdad being then taken and sacked. That dynasty had ruled Asia for five hundred years, and the last feeble member of the house had to give place to the chief of a hardier race.

On the whole, the Mogul rule was beneficial to Persia. Holagou Khan and his son encouraged literature and science, but their successors had neither their enlightened ideas nor their power, and could offer no effectual resistance to Tamerlane, or Timour, when he invaded the country, in 1380. This wonderful man was born in 1336, at Sebzar, in the once powerful kingdom of Zagatai. His whole life was one scene of conquest, and before he was laid in the grave had succeeded in placing twenty-seven crowns upon his head. Well did he deserve his appellation *Timour*, or *Iron*. Zagatai had formerly been governed by Khans; but these were extinct, and young Tamerlane, at a very early age, showed such unmistakable signs of power, that the people soon saw in him the deliverer of the country from its anarchy and confusion. But until he had gained several engagements at fearful odds, his future subjects did not come forward in sufficient numbers to his support to enable him to seize the reins of power. This he was able to do, however, in 1370, or when he was thirty-four years of age, being then crowned

sovereign of Zagatai, and making Samarcand his capital. So altered was the condition of Persia since the days of the great Holagou Khan, that the people were glad of his invasion as a means of delivering them from local tyrants. As we said, he was met with little resistance even from those in power; but some distant portions of the country refused to acknowledge his rule, and the final establishment of his power in the country cannot be said to have taken place until 1393, or five years before the Man of Iron went on his great expedition for the conquest of India. Bagdad had been made the capital of Persia during the Mogul dynasty, in 1345, and this city, as well as the wealthy one of Ormuz, was soon seized by the conqueror. Between the Persian conquest and the invasion of India Timour ravaged East and West Tartary, in the latter expedition actually penetrating into Russia. A man of his temperament would have been miserable during a period of peace, and the proverbial riches of India tempted him in 1398 to cross the Indus and besiege Delhi. He decoyed the defending army out into the plain, and defeating it there, avoided the hazardous operation of a siege. After a year's triumphant campaign, he was recalled by disturbances at home; but after a short rest at Samarcand, he had to contend with Bajazet, the ruler of the great Ottoman empire. It was impossible that two such monarchs should long remain at peace. It is convenient to mention in this place that the rise of the Ottoman or Turkish empire from the invasion of Nicomedia, in 1299, by Othman, or Osman, the founder of the empire, to the time of Bajazet, was an extremely rapid one. In 1356 the Turks gained a permanent settlement in Europe on the coast of Thrace, and four years after Amarath I. took Hadrianople, which was

the capital of the empire until 1453, when Constantinople was captured.

Tamerlane, according to Gibbon,* sent to the sultan of this great nation a letter containing such sentences as the following:—"What is the foundation of thy insolence and folly? Thou hast fought some battles in the woods of Anatolia; contemptible trophies! Thou hast obtained some victories over the Christians of Europe; thy sword was blessed by the apostle of God; and thy obedience to the precept of the Koran, in waging war against the infidels is the sole consideration that prevents us from destroying thy country, the frontier and bulwark of the Moslem world. Be wise in time; reflect; repent; and avert the thunder of our vengeance, which is yet suspended over thy head." The sultan replied in a like strain; but as Bajazet was engaged upon a siege of Constantinople, the forces of the two monarchs did not meet in any important engagement, until the battle of Angora, on July 28, 1402, decided the fate of Bajazet. The latter had an army of 400,000 men, a much greater force than his opponent; but Tamerlane had spared no pains to perfect his men in military evolutions, with such success that the army of Bajazet was routed and its commander taken prisoner. A great deal has been written respecting the treatment of that illustrious personage in his captivity. Gibbon thinks that Sheref-eddin's History of Tamerlane, compiled in the year 1424, and translated into French, by Pelis de la Croix, in 1722, is substantially correct; and that the iron cage, of which so much has been made, was a precaution, not an insult,—for it had been discovered that a mine had been commenced to be dug under his tent, so that

* *Decline and Fall*, IX. 13.

he might escape. Be that as it may, the conquered monarch soon died, and Tamerlane, who could not look back on this campaign with-satisfaction in consequence of the torrents of Moslem blood he had shed, returned for a short time to Samarcand, where festivities lasted two months, and then prepared for the invasion of China. This conquest he was not destined to accomplish ; and, having passed the Shioon when coated with ice, he was seized with a fever near Otrar, and died April, 1405.

In the kingdom of Persia he was succeeded by his youngest son, Shah Rokh, who reigned until 1443. His son, Hussein Mirza, followed ; but the country was again soon rent by wars. In 1468, for example, Azan Hasoun, chief of a tribe of Turkomans, called White Sheep (from the figure on their banner), got possession of Western Persia. It is worthy of note that a descendant of Tamerlane, in the fifth degree, founded in India the kingdom afterwards governed by the great Moguls (whose capital, Delhi, was subsequently sacked by Nadir Shah), having fled from Persia about this period. Sultan Hyder died in battle with the King of Shirwan, at Gulistan, in 1488, and his third son, Ismail Shah, in 1502 established the Seffavean (Suffe, or Sefi) dynasty. He delivered the country from the White Sheep, to which tribe we have before alluded.

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY: Seffavean Dynasty—Shiah Schism—Shah Abbas the Great—Nadir Shah—His invasion of India—State of that country—Kureem Khan—Aga Mohammed—Haji Ibrahim—Kajar Dynasty—Expedition into Georgia—Assassination of Aga—Fetteh Ali—Malcolm's Embassy—Death of Haji Ibrahim—War with Russia.

THE establishment of the Seffavean dynasty is chiefly remarkable for the foundation of the Shiah schism as the religion of Persia. As this belief has continued as the orthodox faith of the country to the present time, it may be interesting to give a brief description in this place of the origin of the two great religious sections into which Mohammedanism was, and is, divided. At the death of Mohammed, and when the tide of Arabian conquest rolled over the world, the few maxims suited to government in the Koran were found inadequate to the requirements of the varied nations who were enrolled under the banner of Islam. To remedy this difficulty, a collection of traditions and sayings of the Prophet was made and regarded as binding. It was called Soona, and those who believed in it Sunnies or Sonnites. Conflicting opinions had, as might be expected, arisen respecting the interpretation of various passages in the Koran itself, and the principal portion of the Sunnies agreed to recognize as correct the interpreta-

tion of four learned doctors, Hancefa, Malik, Shaffei, and Hanbal, who became the high priests of the religion.* The Sunnies also considered that Abubekr (father-in-law of Mohammed and collector of the fragments of the Koran) and Othman were the lawful successors of the Prophet.

In all these opinions they were opposed by the Shiahs, or Shiites (*i. e.* "reprobates," as they are called by the Sunnies), who thought that Ali, son-in-law of Mohammed, should have succeeded directly after his death. And not only so, they affirmed that the Prophet named him as his heir. His son Hussein was murdered at Kerbela, in 680, and the remembrance of this act is the most distinctive feature of the Shiah belief. Every year, on the first day of the month Mohurrem, the Persians appear in mourning. A theatre in nearly every Persian town is set apart for a representation of his death. The actors receive no payment for their performances, and people lend their most beautiful dresses to render the scenes worthy of the subject. It appears that in some parts of Persia this representation is thought improper, and so the description is read in families, people being worked up by its recital into an extraordinary state of religious excitement.† The Shiahs, of course, will not receive the Soona, and only believe the interpretations of the Koran which have been given by Ali, Hussein, and the next seven lineal descendants of the Prophet, who form their nine imams. It is interesting to notice that when Tamerlane took the city of Aleppo he condescended to hold a conference with some learned doctors of the law, who came among others to sup-

* Sir J. Malcolm's *History of Persia*, II. 237.

† R. Grant Watson's *History of Persia*, chap. ii.

plicate the mercy of the conqueror. He asked who were the true martyrs,—those Moslems who fell on his side or those on his enemies. He was reminded that the Prophet had said that the motive, not the design, makes the martyr. An answer they made respecting the true succession of the Caliphs did not please him, and he exclaimed: “Ali alone is the true successor of the Prophet.” A convenient tenet of the Shiah sect is the doctrine that it is lawful for a man, if necessary, to conceal his true religion. This enables them to visit the great Sunni shrine of Mecca, but a great many Persians content themselves with visiting the sepulchres or shrines of Ali, at Nujuff, Hussein, at Kerbela, and Imam Riza, at Meshed. The Mohammedans—particularly the Shiahs—venerate the relics of the followers of the Prophet in the same manner as the members of the Roman Catholic Church adore those of early saints and martyrs. The establishment of the Shiah faith in Persia, as Sir John Malcolm points out, gave to a country in which patriotism was unknown a principle of union of considerable force. The Shiahs do not now call the Sunnies infidels, but refuse them the appellation of “faithful” (moumeen).

But it must be noted that the first Seffavean king did not establish the Shiah religion in Persia in an unadulterated form. One of his own ancestors was a distinguished professor of the Sufee doctrine; and though we shall give more details respecting this faith in our chapter on the Religion of Persia, we may remark here that though the king, Ismail Shah, did not give the Sufee belief a chance of taking the place of the orthodox faith of Persia, many persons in his dominions were attached to it. The word Sufee is an Arabic word, signifying “wise, pious.” The leading tenets of

this belief were the presence of the Creator everywhere, and the probation of man through four stages in this life to a perfect state, the last two of which could only be attained by severe fastings and other mortifications. The devotees of this belief did not mutilate themselves as the various sects of India. Besides these tenets, there were secret observances only known to the initiated. It is impossible not to admire the self-abnegation of the followers of this religion, and a mixture of their doctrines in the Shiah faith would not be disadvantageous to the latter.

The Persian kings were not considered the heads of the Persian religion, such a position being taken by the high priests, who by their superior sanctity attained to that dignity. The Seffavean monarchs were esteemed as holy on account of their descent from a saint.* According to Kempfer, who visited Persia in 1712, the very water in which the Seffavean monarch of that time washed was esteemed as a cure for all complaints. We may now pause to note the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope, by the Portuguese. The honour of that discovery belongs to Bartholomew Diaz, who reached it in 1498, and called it the Cape of Tempests,—a name soon after changed by the King of Portugal into its present appellation. But to Vasco di Gama the credit is due of being the first to utilize this Cape as a passage to India. This he did in 1497, and returned to Lisbon after a two years' voyage. In 1502, or in the very year of the establishment of the Seffavean dynasty in Persia, he went the same voyage a second time, and returned with rich spoils. Soon after this the Portuguese established, for the convenience of trade, a colony at

* Malcolm's *History of Persia*, II. 302.

Ormuz, at the entrance of the Persian Gulf. It is interesting to observe the rise of our intercourse with Persia. Under Sebastian Cabot, in 1553, trade was opened up with Russia. This led to the establishment of the Russian Company, which received the royal sanction in 1566. The agents of this commercial corporation soon engaged in a profitable trade with Persia.

Shah Abbas the Great ascended the throne of Persia in 1586. It was in the reign of this, the greatest monarch of the Seffavean dynasty, that Sir Anthony Shirley, with a distinguished retinue, appeared in Persia. By his advice the Persian army was remodelled and so improved that the subsequent victories of Shah Abbas are to be assigned to the training of the English. He expelled the Uzbeks from Khorassan, and the Turks soon ceded to the victorious conqueror, Georgia, Kurdistan, Bagdad, and Erivan. This monarch selected Ispahan for his capital instead of Kasvin, the chief city since 1574. The colony of Ormuz was wrested from the Portuguese mainly by the assistance of the English. In the reign of James I. we sent Sir Dodmore Cotton as ambassador to this monarch. Shah Abbas died in 1628. It is somewhat remarkable that this king, who ruled his people with an iron hand, and in many cases was grossly cruel and intolerant, should have treated the Armenian Christians so kindly. It has been suggested that he feared to offend the Turks. The latter nation, ten years after his death, took Bagdad, and massacred 30,000 Persians, gaining thereby a good deal of its lost territory.

From 1628, when Abbas the Great died, to 1722, four monarchs occupied the Persian throne,—Shah Suffee, Abbas II., Soliman, and Hussein; but the historian has no im-

portant events to chronicle, nor to point out a system of more enlightened rule. If these monarchs of the Seffavean house had only governed fairly, the Affghan rebellion would never have assumed such formidable proportions. But the weakness of the government tempted those warlike tribes to revolt, and war was waged against them for some years, until in 1722 they were able to defeat the Persians at the battle of Goolnabad, and take Ispahan. Then it was that Shah Hussein was driven from his throne, and Meer Mahmood, the Affghan chieftain, took his place. Three years after this he was assassinated, and Ashraff succeeded. He also was an Affghan, and reigned four years. Meanwhile, the son of Hussein, Tahmasp, was in exile, and was there joined by a Khorassan robber, or, perhaps, we ought to say, "a soldier of fortune," who offered to help him to regain his throne. This offer was made by no other than Nadir Kooli, afterwards so celebrated as Nadir Shah. This wonderful man saw, in the temporary restoration of the Seffavean dynasty, a means towards the realization of those schemes he had long been indulging. He knew well that the weak monarchs of that failing house, could not long hold their own, but, if by his services he could obtain a high place in the country, he might grasp the supreme power when opportunity offered. He rather gloried in his low birth than not, and did not hesitate at any crime which he thought necessary to prepare his way to the throne. At a more humble part of his career his uncle had been obliged to expel him from the fort of Kelat. When he got the chance he seized that fort, and murdered his uncle. By his aid, however, Shah Tahmasp gained the throne in 1729, though he soon took a dislike to his too-

powerful subject. He was obliged to give Nadir the four finest provinces in the kingdom in return for his assistance, and offered to let him assume the title of Sultan; but this Nadir declined.

The general who had been so victorious against the Affghans now turned his attention to the Turks. In the midst of a successful campaign against them, he was obliged to quell an Affghan rebellion at Herat. While thus engaged, Shah Tahmasp thought he might also earn military glory, and marched against the Turks himself. He was ignominiously defeated, and obliged to conclude a disgraceful treaty of peace. Nadir was so exasperated at this that he sent letters to the chief men of the country, stating that he would soon regain the lost territory, notwithstanding the treaty. He invited the Shah to a banquet, and at its conclusion made him his prisoner. Though Nadir might at this time have succeeded to the throne, he thought he was not sufficiently powerful, and so placed there the son of Tahmasp, a child of eight months old, under the title of Abbas III.

During the reign, if we can so call it, of Abbas III., from 1732 to 1736, Nadir was engaged against the Turks. In 1734 he was defeated with immense loss near Bagdad by a force under Topal Osman. Sir John Malcolm tells us that, instead of reproaching his soldiers, he tried the novel plan of praising and enriching them. He was soon enabled to gather to his standard a formidable force, and, defeating the Turks, concluded an advantageous peace with the Pacha of Bagdad. This the Emperor of Constantinople refused to ratify, and he had to defeat another large force before it was respected. Early in 1736 the infant monarch was

said to have died at Ispahan, and Nadir assembled, February 26, on the plain of Mogam, all the principal people in the kingdom, to appoint a successor. It is hardly necessary to say that he was unanimously requested to take the crown, and his first refusal, and subsequent reluctant acceptance, were edifying in the extreme!

A great ruler may conquer a country and yet be powerless in permanently changing its religion. Nadir told the assembled thousands that, if he took the crown, they must give up the Shiah for the Sunni faith. This they agreed to do; but the measure was so unpopular throughout the country, that it could never be carried into effect. It has been a puzzle to those who have investigated the life of this wonderful man, that one who always studied the prejudices of a nation, and converted them to his ambitious purposes, should have attempted such a reformation. Sir J. Malcolm's explanation is probably the correct one, that he "began in his waking visions to contemplate, as parts of his future empire, the mountains of Kandahar, the plains of India, and the fine provinces of Asia Minor, and naturally sought the abolition of a sect, which, by its very institution, revived the memory of a family he had destroyed, and which appeared, from the hatred with which its followers were regarded by the nations he proposed to subdue, likely to interpose a considerable obstacle to the progress of his power." * In the edict which was issued, he said, in reference to the Shiah custom of adding "And Ali is the friend of God" to the Mohammedan formula, "There is but one God, and Mohammed is his prophet": "This is repugnant to religion, and contrary to the agree-

* *History of Persia*, II. 18.

ment and covenant entered into. Besides, it is evident to the world that, as the prince of the faithful, the lion of God, the victorious, is elect, praised, and acceptable to the Lord of Glory, his rank and interest at the event of unity will not be increased by vulgar testimony, nor the full moon of his power be diminished by omitting these words. The ill consequence of this form is that both sects, who equally acknowledge the chief and prophet of both worlds, will by this difference be provoked to animosities which are disagreeable both to the prophet and to the prince of the faithful." *

But in the Shiah priesthood he raised up a powerful band of enemies who were not satisfied until he had been assassinated. The next three years were spent by Nadir in defeating the Affghans in Kandahar, developing the resources of Persia, and preparing for his invasion of India. In February, 1739, he was ready to invade the latter country. It was fortunate that he had no stronger monarch to encounter than Mohammed Shah, whose army was defeated at the first onset. Nadir marched to Delhi, and entered the city about the 9th of March. He agreed to keep Mohammed Shah on the throne on condition that he ceded the countries beyond the Indus, and gave up to the conqueror the greater portion of the wealth of Delhi. He would have left the capital without any bloodshed, but a report having been circulated that he was dead, the inhabitants murdered his guards, and he felt himself obliged to order a general massacre. Mohammed Shah interceded for his people, and the massacre was stopped—not, however, before many thousands had perished. After remaining in the city nearly

* *Fraser's History of Nadir Shah*, 123.

two months, Nadir departed, carrying away treasure estimated to be worth from forty to fifty millions sterling. He was passionately fond of precious stones, and the principal portion of the jewels for which the present treasury of the Shah is so famous were procured on this occasion. Thence came the Peacock Throne of the Emperor of Delhi, which blazed with precious stones. We should mention that when in Delhi he married his second son to the emperor's daughter; his eldest had already espoused the child of Shah Tahmasp, and of these alliances the former robber of Khorassan was justly proud. It is remarkable that Nadir did not complete the conquest of India, but it is probable that he thought he could not hold the country, and preferred to relieve it of some of its immense wealth to enrich his kingdom, which greatly needed it.

Nadir made Meshed the capital of the empire, though he preferred Kelat as a residence, and it had the advantage of being strongly fortified. When on his way to Daghestan, to revenge the death of his brother, Ibrahim Khan, he was fired at by an assassin. Thinking that his son had instigated this attempt upon his life, Nadir ordered his eyes to be put out,* and for the remaining five years of his life his gross deeds of cruelty made him universally hated by his subjects. He would only have Tartars and Affghans about his person, and in fact seemed entirely to forget that system of conciliation which had made him so popular in the first years of his reign. He took every opportunity of insulting the Shiah priesthood, and depriving them of their revenues. He did not encourage any other faith, and personally seems

* When this deed was performed his son is reported to have said, "It is not my eyes that you have put out, but those of Persia."

to have had no religion at all. Suspicious of his Persian officers, he had, in June, 1747, determined to have them put to death. His destined victims, hearing of this, formed a conspiracy among themselves, and four of their number agreed to penetrate to his tent, and assassinate him. This was successfully carried out on the 19th day of that month, and the powerful conqueror, who had raised Persia to a pitch of prosperity she had not enjoyed for a long period, ceased to reign.*

Nadir's nephew, Ali, was chosen by the chiefs to occupy the throne, and in his first proclamation stated that his uncle was murdered by his orders. An Affghan chief, Ahmed Khan, seized Kandahar, which he made the capital of a somewhat powerful kingdom. Though in the above-mentioned proclamation Ali (who reigned under the title of Adil Shah, the Just King) alluded with horror to his uncle's barbarities, he commenced his rule by the murder of all Nadir's progeny except his grandson Shahrukh, then fourteen years of age. He spared this boy (who was a son of Nadir's

* "The Life of Nadir Shah," says Binning (II. 262), "written by his private secretary, Mirza Mehdi, is one of the best pieces of Persian biography I have ever perused. The author accompanied his master in many of his campaigns. He concludes the work thus, with the murder of the Shah :—

"At nightfall, he was plotting schemes of ruthless slaughter and pillage,
By daybreak his head was without a crown, and his body without a head
In a single revolution of the azure vault of heaven,
Nadir and his empire had vanished together."

This work has been translated into French by Sir W. Jones, at the request of the King of Denmark, and we are informed that his version obtained the applause of the learned of Europe. I wonder how many of these *savans* ever took the trouble, or had the opportunity, of comparing it with the original? for, had they done so, I incline to think they might have been more sparing of their commendation. My own private opinion of the performance is in no way favourable."

eldest son, Riza Kooli, by Fatimah, daughter of Shah Hussein, and therefore the heir of the Seffavean house) because he thought he might be convenient to produce if the people required a restoration of that dynasty. But these schemes were defeated by his brother, Ibrahim Khan, the governor of Irak. This man succeeded in getting possession of Adil's person, and deprived his brother of sight. He mounted the throne, which he occupied only a short time. In fact, the two brothers did not reign a year, for in 1748 the adherents of Shahrukh placed him on the throne.

Let us for a moment turn to India and see what has been going on in that country since Nadir Shah bore the Peacock Throne in triumph from the city of Delhi. We cannot do better than quote the following passage from Lord Macaulay's brilliant essay on Lord Clive.* "The Afghan soon followed, to complete the work of devastation which the Persian had begun. The warlike tribes of Rajpootana threw off the Mussulman yoke. A band of mercenary soldiers occupied Rohilcund. The Seiks ruled on the Indus. The Jauts spread dismay along the Jumna. The highlands which border on the western sea-coast of India poured forth a yet more formidable race, a race which was long the terror of every native power, and which, after many desperate and doubtful struggles, yielded only to the fortune and genius of England. It was under the reign of Aurungzebe that this wild clan of plunderers first descended from their mountains; and soon after his death every corner of his wide empire learned to tremble at the mighty name of the Mahrattas. Many fertile vice-royalties were entirely subdued by them. Their dominions stretched across the

* *Critical and Historical Essays*, III. 128.

peninsula from sea to sea. Mahratta captains reigned at Poonah, at Gualior, in Guzerat, in Berar, and in Tanjore. Nor did they, though they had become great sovereigns, therefore cease to be freebooters. They still retained the predatory habits of their forefathers. Every region which was not subject to their rule was wasted by their incursions. . . . In what was this confusion to end? Was the strife to continue during centuries? Was it to terminate in the rise of another great monarchy? Was the Mussulman or the Mahratta to be the lord of India? Was another Baber to descend from the mountains or to lead the hardy tribes of Cabul and Khorassan against a wealthier and less warlike race? None of these events seemed improbable. But scarcely any man, however sagacious, would have thought it possible that a trading company, separated from India by fifteen thousand miles of sea, and possessing in India only a few acres for purpose of commerce, would in less than a hundred years spread its empire from Cape Comorin to the eternal sun of the Himalayas; would compel Mahrattan and Mahomedan to forget their mutual feuds in common subjection; would tame down even those wild races which had resisted the most powerful of the Moguls, and, having united under its laws a hundred millions of subjects, would carry its victorious arms far to the east of the Burampooter, and far to the west of the Hydaspes, dictate terms of peace at the gates of Ava, and set its vassal on the throne of Kandahar."

Having thus transcribed, from the eloquent pages of Macaulay, a description of the condition of that country which was generally included in the ambitious schemes of Persian conquerors, we return to Persia, now governed by

Shahrukh. He soon had to contest the throne with another descendant of the Seffavean kings, Meerza Syud Mohammed (Shah Hussein's sister's son), who held the high office of custodian of the shrine of Imam Riza at Meshed. So rapid were his movements, that he surprised Shahrukh, took him prisoner, and put out his eyes. The fallen monarch's able general, Yoosuf Ali, was still at large, and he was able to collect a great force, defeat the usurper, and restore the blind monarch to the throne. But it was not to be supposed that a king in that unfortunate condition would be able to hold his position against the machinations of the aspirants to royalty, who usually appear on such occasions. The regent, Yoosuf, was defeated and slain by two of these, Mir Alum and Ahmed Khan. It is unnecessary, however, to chronicle the dissensions of the country before Kureem Khan, in 1758, was able to establish anything like a settled government. He was chief of the tribe of Zend. Like Nadir, he was of comparatively low birth, but his forbearing disposition, forming such a contrast to the characteristics of the monarchs who had recently ruled Persia, endeared him to all with whom he was brought in contact. When Ali Murdan took possession of Ispahan, one of those he invited to further his schemes was Kureem Khan; but these men with similar ambitious projects were not long likely to agree, but soon their differences were terminated by the assassination of Ali, and Kureem gained the southern provinces of Persia. His way was not, however, smooth at first, for he received a severe defeat from Azad Khan, the Affghan ruler of Azerbijan, and was obliged to give up the important cities of Ispahan and Shiraz. But managing to get the army of his enemy into

the pass of Kumaridge, by the advice of Roostem Shah, the chief of Khisht, he cut it in pieces. He had another powerful enemy in Mohammed Hussein Khan, the chief of the Kajars, an important tribe whose origin, and subsequent attainment of supreme power, we shall have shortly to chronicle. Compelled to leave the country by Nadir Shah, Mohammed Hussein returned to it on the death of that monarch. After defeating Azad Khan, he was powerful enough to wrest Ispahan from the grasp of Kureem Khan, who was obliged to shut himself up in Shiraz. The inhabitants of the neighbouring villages burnt their crops so that the besiegers could not obtain their supplies, and Mohammed Hussein was obliged to retreat, and in a subsequent engagement was defeated and slain. After Fetteh Ali Khan, chief of the Affshar tribe, had been defeated, Kureem Khan was comparatively at peace, though occasionally harassed by the outbreaks of his half-brother, Zuckee Khan.

When Ali Murdan and Kureem were contending for the pre-eminence, the former placed on the throne a boy nine years of age, a son of the sister of Shah Hussein, under the title of Shah Ismail. Kureem subjected him to a mild imprisonment, but still he would not himself take the title of Shah, but simply that of Vakeel, or Regent. He made, in 1760, the beautiful city of Shiraz, the capital, which he ornamented by the erection of handsome public buildings. He did not conduct in person the Turkish war, which was waged at the latter part of his reign—if we may apply that term to the government of a regent—but allowed his brother, Saduk Khan, to conduct the siege of Bussorah. The Pacha of Bagdad had levied a tax upon the Persian pilgrims who visited the tombs of Ali and his sons, and war was

declared because the court of Constantinople refused to send the head of the offending Pacha to Shiraz. Kureem wished probably to undertake a popular war, and he knew that the Persians as Shiah were always ready to attack the Turks as Sunnies. The city fell; but Saduk, acting according to the instructions of his brother, spared the inhabitants, and afterwards ruled them with extreme moderation. Many Armenian Christians were settled in Persia at this time; and Kureem, impressed by their industrious habits, afforded them every protection. He likewise encouraged commerce and agriculture throughout his dominions,* and earned great popularity from all classes by rebuilding the tombs of the great poets Hafiz and Saadi at Shiraz. He died, in 1779, at the ripe age of eighty years.

Zuckee Khan seized the government. He was a man of a very cruel temperament, and consequently extremely unpopular. He did not like to declare himself Kureem's successor, and therefore proclaimed Abul Fetteh Khan and Mohammed Ali Khan joint monarchs. Some powerful Zend chiefs had thrown themselves into the citadel at Shiraz, but were induced by Zuckee to surrender, on condition that their lives should be spared. When they had done so they were all butchered. Kureem's brother Saduk left Bussorah and attempted to besiege Shiraz. He was obliged to retreat; and about this time Zuckee, who was afraid that Abul Fetteh Khan favoured his uncle, put that monarch in prison, and Mohammed reigned alone, Zuckee of course exercising the real power.

* "Of all the long list of Persian kings, the name of Kureem Khan alone deserves to be mentioned as the father and cherisher of his people, as a lover of justice and humanity, and a stranger to wanton cruelty and oppression." (Binning, II. 267.)

During the latter years of Kureem Khan the head of the Kajar tribe, Aga Mohammed Khan, had been confined at Shiraz. His imprisonment was a very light one, however ; and on the death of Kureem he managed to escape to his province of Mazanderan. If he had not done so, there can be no doubt that Zuckee Khan would have put an end to his life. Zuckee sent his nephew, Ali Moorad, with a considerable force to prevent his advance ; but to his uncle's intense chagrin he revolted, and persuaded the force he commanded to do so also. He was able to seize Ispahan, and Zuckee Khan soon marched after him. He stopped at Yezdikhaust, and treated the inhabitants with the greatest barbarity. Eighteen of the principal, together with a descendant of the Prophet, were seized and thrown down a precipice. Such an act was only required to induce his followers to assassinate him, and, on this being done, Abul Fetteh Khan became sole monarch of Persia. This did not suit Saduk Khan, who seized the young king, put out his eyes, and mounted the vacant throne. Another competitor, Ali Moorad, was in the field, and Saduk sent a large army under his son to crush him. Though at first defeated, Ali was eventually successful, and marched upon Shiraz. Saduk sent a force to oppose him ; but this he dispersed, and for eight months Shiraz was besieged, and at last taken by Ali Moorad, who put Saduk and all his sons, except Jaffer Khan, to death. This occurred in February, 1781. He sent his son, Vais, to invade Mazanderan, the province of Aga Mohammed Khan, to whose fortunes we must now turn. At first Vais was very successful, but, like a rash youth, he did not secure his rear ; his supplies were cut off by the enemy ; he was obliged to make a rapid

retreat with great loss, and compelled to abandon the conquests he had at first made. At one period it seemed as if this reign would have been a fairly quiet one, but early in 1785 Ali Moorad received intelligence of the revolt of Jaffer Khan. He instantly, though suffering from a severe illness, determined to meet him in the field—how he must have regretted that he spared him at the siege of Shiraz—and arrived at a village about thirty miles from Ispahan. He could proceed no farther, and died there.

Jaffer Khan arrived at Ispahan February 16, 1785, and his first care was to decoy Vais, under promise of friendship, into his power, and then put out his eyes. And now, delighted at the death of Ali Moorad, Aga Mohammed prepared for an invasion, so that there seemed no chance of peace for the country. He did not lose any time, for he entered Ispahan on May 6, thus marching four hundred miles in eleven weeks, or thirty-six miles a day. Jaffer Khan, without hazarding an engagement, fled to Shiraz. Aga Mohammed attacked the Bukhteearees, a hardy mountain tribe; but they inflicted such losses upon him, that he was obliged to evacuate Ispahan and retreat to Teheran. The latter days of Jaffer Khan were disgraced by several unworthy acts. His general, Haji Ali Kuli, had been sent to crush a rebellion in the east of Kashan. A body of 1500 infantry surrendered on condition that their lives should be spared. Jaffer Khan thought they ought to have been butchered, and ordered them all to be thrown into prison. So annoyed was Haji with the conduct of the monarch, that he left the army; but when Jaffer swore upon the Koran that he would not harm him, he returned, and was rewarded for his con-

fidence in the good faith of the monarch by being thrown into prison. With other prisoners a conspiracy was entered into against the life of Jaffer. They found means to bribe a slave to poison him, which event took place in January, 1789.

One of the chief of the conspirators, Syud Moorad Khan, was made king, but he only occupied the throne a short time, for the chief magistrate of Shiraz, Haji Ibrahim, was the means of the accession of Lootf Ali Khan, Jaffer's son. "His appearance," says Sir John Malcolm, "was singularly calculated to win that admiration which his qualities commanded. His countenance was beautiful and full of animated expression: his form tall and graceful; though slender, he was active and strong. In skill as a horseman, and in dexterity at all martial exercises, he was unrivalled, nor was he deemed wanting in the mental qualities which his situation required. He had displayed on several occasions as much conduct as courage. Before he ascended the throne his manners were kind and prepossessing, particularly to his inferiors; but soon after he obtained power his disposition changed, and his mind appears to have lost some of its best qualities." Such was Lootf Ali, last prince of the Zend dynasty. Aga Mohammed Khan soon came to attack him, but after a success of a temporary character, was obliged to retire. A year of quiet ensued as far as Aga Monammed was concerned; but Lootf Ali, wishing to reduce the city of Kerman to submission, invested it in the winter, contrary to the urgent advice of his generals. One is astonished, in reading the accounts of the sieges of Oriental cities, to note how defences, which we should think weak in the extreme, held

the besiegers at bay for months. But the engines of war used by the latter were generally totally inadequate to make an impression on the walls, and the investing party was often obliged calmly to sit down before the city and wait until hunger had done its work upon the inhabitants within. Lootf Ali, after losing many men and horses in consequence of the severity of the weather, was obliged to retire from Kerman, and abandon the siege. At this time there were not wanting many to poison the mind of the Shah against his great subject, Haji Ibrahim, to whom he owed his crown. In fact, it was the old story of Edward IV. and Warwick over again—the king jealous of the “king-maker”—and Lootf Ali did not require much misrepresentation by others to determine him to take the first opportunity that offered to crush the governor of Shiraz. Soon after he came to the throne he pardoned, at the request of Haji Ibrahim, Mirza Mehdi, who had been in the service of Jaffer Khan, but who took part in the conspiracy against him. He now ordered him to be burnt, and told Haji what he had done. After this the governor, as he told Sir John Malcolm, lost all confidence in his sovereign, and plotted his destruction. His thoughts naturally turned to Aga Mohammed, and when Lootf Ali marched to Ispahan to fight the Kajar chief, he seized those who had charge of the citadel—for he was only civil governor—and sent to his brother, who was with Lootf Ali, a message stating what he had done. He persuaded a number of chiefs to revolt, and the king had to fly with only a few followers. The impetuous monarch came to Shiraz; and when Haji Ibrahim told the followers of Lootf Ali to come into the city if they wished to save their

families, nearly all his little band deserted. He fled to Bunder Reeg, where the governor gave him men, and after minor successes, he defeated a force which Aga Mohammed, at the request of Haji Ibrahim, sent to the relief of Shiraz. A still stronger force was despatched by the Kajar chief, but this was defeated even more signally than the other. Aga Mohammed saw that only one chance was left him, namely, to advance himself with all his available soldiers. This he did; and at Mayen, near the ruins of Perseopolis, he nearly lost his chance of the Persian crown, for Lootf Ali, with a desperate valour worthy of the greatest admiration, and a force not much more than a hundredth part of that of his opponent, dashed into the camp in the night and routed the greater portion of the army. Misled by the statement of one of his followers that the Kajar chief had fled, he avoided entering the royal tent, in which Aga Mohammed quietly remained. The latter knew the small force of his opponent, and that this would be apparent at the dawn of day. So, as soon as the rays of the sun gilded the east, Lootf Ali, discovering his mistake too late, was obliged to save himself by a rapid flight.

At Kerman he began enrolling soldiers, much to the disquiet of Aga Mohammed, who had in the mean time marched to Shiraz. The desertion of some of his followers compelled him to retire to Khorassan, and, having received assistance from one of the chiefs of that district, he besieged the important town of Darabjird. Owing to the strength of the forces sent against him Lootf Ali was obliged to retreat; but hoping that his good fortune would prevail, hazarded an engagement, and was defeated. Disasters such as these

would have crushed an ordinary man, but two chiefs in the eastern district of Kerman offering to assist him, he with their aid seized the city of that name. With this great achievement his career was to end, for Aga Mohammed collected a large force, and invested the city for four months. But the bravest chief is powerless to contend against treachery, and the giving up to the enemy of several important parts of the city by chiefs he had trusted decided the fate of the place, but not that of the king. For, notwithstanding that Aga Mahommed had taken every precaution to prevent his escape, he fled in the night; and so enraged was the conqueror, that he ordered a wholesale massacre of the unfortunate inhabitants. Again Lootf Ali was to suffer by treachery, for the governor of Nerman-sheer, to whom he fled, fearful of the vengeance of Aga, determined to give him up to his enemy. When he found what they were going to do he defended himself so bravely that he nearly escaped again, but was overpowered by the power of numbers. "The fortune of this prince," says Ali Reza in his "History of the Zend family," "like the splendour of the meteor which he resembled, shone brightest at the moment of its close." We wish we could add that Aga Mohammed showed, by his treatment of the fallen monarch, his respect for the bravery of his foe. On the contrary, every indignity was offered to the illustrious prisoner, who, after he had been tortured and deprived of sight, longed for death to put an end to his miserable existence.

The Persian historians of the Kajar dynasty, the present royal house of the country, love to trace the tribe to Terek,

the son of Japhet. It is enough for our present purpose to point out that this Turkish tribe was brought by Tamerlane into Persia, from Syria, and was important enough in the third year of the sixteenth century to be one of the seven tribes who raised the first monarch of the Seffavean dynasty (Shah Ismail) to the supreme power. Abbas the Great (1582—1627) divided it into three portions. One of these soon died out. The second possessed the old city of Merv, the capital of the ancient Margiana, founded by Alexander the Great. But this city had to be given up to the Usbeks, a tribe who had always made its retention no easy matter. The third branch of the Kajar tribe was settled in Asterabad and on the Goorgau, and, from the position of its pasture grounds, was subdivided into upper and lower sections. The former of these subdivisions was considered superior until the time of Shah Tahmasp, who made Fetteh Ali Khan his general. As he belonged to the lower division, it became the chief, until Fetteh was murdered by Nadir Shah. His son, Mohammed Hussein Khan, in the time of Kureem Khan (1753—79), was able by the aid of the Turkomans to seize Asterabad, and we have before mentioned the trouble he gave Kureem Khan by the siege of Shiraz. It was his son, Aga Mohammed Khan, who, by the defeat of Lootf Ali, last monarch of the Zend dynasty, ascended the Persian throne.

This event took place in 1794, and the conduct of Aga, in his contest with Lootf Ali, prepared the country for a cruel government. Early in life this king had fallen into the power of Nadir Shah's nephew and successor, Adil Shah, who ordered him to be made an eunuch. We have mentioned his captivity at Shiraz under Kureem Khan, and

his escape from the city on the death of that monarch, at which time he was thirty-six years of age. His confinement at Shiraz gave him plenty of opportunity for study, which he knew would be of use to him in the high position he longed to occupy. Though treated more as the friend than the captive of Kureem Khan, he never lost sight of the fact that to his captor he was indebted for the ruin of his house, and, when he had the opportunity, gratified his thirst for revenge. That opportunity occurred when, at the age of fifty-one, he mounted the throne of Persia, and ordered every one of the tribe of Zend who was even remotely connected with the late royal family to be put to death, or to be deprived of their eyes. It is only fair to mention that he did not treat in the same manner the rival branch of the Kajar tribe, though it was chiefly owing to the conduct of its chief that his father had been slain. But Aga Mohammed saw that by reconciling the two branches of the Kajar tribe he should consolidate his power, and by blinding or killing members of the blood royal of the house of Zend he should prevent any member of that dynasty from aspiring to the throne. With reference to other changes which have been preferred against Aga Mohammed and other Persian rulers, we cannot do better than quote the following able remarks of Sir John Malcolm : “ Living under a government protected by laws, we associate cruelty and oppression with every act of a despot. His executions are murders ; and the destruction of helpless citizens (who in an assault too generally share the fate of the garrison) is deemed a horrid massacre. But we must not assume that justice is always violated because the form of administering it is repugnant to our feelings ;

and we should recollect that, even among civilized nations, the inhabitants of towns taken by storm are exposed to pillage and slaughter, without any charge of barbarity against those by whom they are plundered or put to the sword. The punishment of bodies of men to deter others of similar condition is, perhaps, the only mode by which uncivilized nations can be preserved in peace." * Sir John is especially referring to the massacre of the inhabitants of Kerman. But Aga gratified a revenge of a most contemptible nature, when he had the bones of Nadir Shah and Kureem Khan disinterred and buried at the entrance of his palace, so that he might daily have the satisfaction of trampling upon them.

The act of Haji Ibrahim in holding Shiraz for Aga has already been described. It is greatly to the credit of the latter that, instead of, like Lootf Ali, being jealous of so great a subject, he at once made him his prime minister, and throughout his reign treated him with the utmost confidence. The king soon appeared to be suspicious of his brothers. Three of the five had fled from Persia, another he deprived of sight, and the fifth he now determined should perish. From some cause—probably because his brother had refused him the government of Ispahan—he did not readily respond to a summons to attend at court. His brother by the most affectionate messages got him into his power, and then had the noble prince, Jaffer Kuli, murdered. Aga pretended the most intense grief, and told his nephew, then about fourteen years of age, that he had done it on his account, as his uncle would not have allowed him to occupy the throne.

* *History of Persia*, II. 181, 182.

Aga Mohammed removed his capital from Shiraz to Teheran, which city was in a much more convenient situation for the government of the country. Mr. Watson says * that the earliest mention of this place occurs in the writings of an oriental author of the twelfth century. The inhabitants then lived entirely underground, from which subterranean dwellings they did not emerge until the fifteenth century. It is described as a large town with few inhabitants, by an European traveller in 1618. Shah Tahmasp during the Affghan invasion took refuge there, and Nadir Shah held a great conference with priests of various faiths. We know how in England people in the Middle Ages, from a semi-religious motive, left money to build bridges and repair "noyous wayes." In Persia a similar feeling seems to have been gratified—not by the making of roads, for there is not one worthy the name in the kingdom—but in building large inns or caravan-serais for the accommodation of travellers. In Teheran Aga Mohammed built several of these, one or two of very large size. In almost every city in Persia a large building, or series of buildings, was strongly fortified and called the ark or citadel. In this the garrison retired when the walls had been stormed, and sustained a second siege. A parallel to this in our own country is the keep of a mediæval castle. The ark at Teheran occupied about a fourth of the city, and contained the king's palace.

The inhabitants of Asterabad were much annoyed by the hostile incursions of the Turkoman tribes of the neighbour-

* *History of Persia from beginning of the Nineteenth Century to 1858*, chap. iii.

ing plains. Aga Mohammed marched against these and punished them severely. He also remembered that they had murdered his brother Hussein Kuli, and though Aga was not remarkable for affection to his relatives, it was convenient to have such a motive for the severity with which he now treated those tribes.

In 1783, Heraclius, the Prince of Georgia, had, by a solemn treaty, renounced his dependence on Persia, and placed himself and country under the protection of the Empress Catherine of Russia. This was in accordance with a plan formed by Peter the Great. Aga Mohammed determined to regain this important province, and marched with a large force to compel Heraclius to submit. Fearing that he would be reinforced by Russia, Aga marched with great speed and privacy to the capital, Tiflis. Heraclius could not muster a fourth of his enemy's force, and was defeated with great loss. As the Georgians were Christians, the Mohammedans gave no quarter, and the carnage was fearful. The neighbouring provinces were awed into submission, after the sack of the capital, and now Aga consented to assume the crown; for though he had enjoyed supreme power more than a year, he objected to be crowned until he had subdued the enemies of Persia. He told the assembled courtiers that if they wished him to wear a crown, they must agree to help him to regain "as much power as had been enjoyed by the greatest sovereign of Persia." Even then he would not assume the magnificent crown of Nadir Shah, but merely a pearl-studded circlet. To the great delight of the religious, he pledged himself to the advancement of the Shiah faith, by wearing a sword consecrated at the tomb of

the monarch who established that belief in Persia, Ismail Shah.*

On the fall of Shahrukh, Ahmed Shah had allowed him to reside in Meshed, and govern it and the surrounding district. Thousands of pilgrims annually resorted to the sacred tomb or shrine of the Imam Riza. Aga Mohammed, who advanced with a force to that city, pretended to be merely one of these. His real reason for the expedition was this: when Shahrukh went to Meshed, the fallen monarch took with him many jewels of great value, part of the spoils which Nadir had brought from India. Aga Mohammed, like Nadir, was passionately fond of jewels, and after he had prayed at the holy tomb, he requested the blind monarch to deliver up the gems. He, however, protested that he had none, so he was ordered to be tortured, and revealed the hiding-places of stones of great value. The last torture was diabolical: a circle of paste was put on his head and boiling oil poured in, its effect being that an immense ruby, which had been in the crown of Aurungzebe, was given up.† The poor king died soon after from the injuries he received.

The Empress Catherine of Russia was furious, when she heard of the treatment the people of Georgia had received. She immediately ordered a considerable force to be assembled, and march into that country. After gaining possession of the territory on the coast of the Caspian, the Russian army, under Zuboff, crossed the Araxes, and prepared to winter on the plain of Chowal Mogam, on which, years before, Nadir had assembled the

* The first monarch of the Seffavean dynasty ascended the throne 1502, so that the Shiah branch of the Mohammedan religion has been established in Persia about 370 years.

† Malcolm, *History of Persia*, II. 196.

people, and asked who should be king. So powerful and well-disciplined was this force, that Aga Mqhammed would have needed all his resources, directed by his skill as a commander, to overcome it. But at the end of the year (1796) the death of Catherine caused the recall of the army, and Persia was saved.*

In the spring of 1797 Aga, delighted to get rid of the Russians, whose power he probably feared, though his policy would not allow him to show it, determined to march into Georgia, with the soldiers he had assembled with the idea of repelling the Russian invasion. On his way there the inhabitants of Sheshah offered to deliver up to him that important fortress. Three days after he had occupied it two of his personal attendants offended the king in some way, and he ordered them to be killed; but remembering that it was Friday evening, which was devoted to prayer, he agreed to spare them until the next morning. To Aga Mohammed that next morning never came. By an extraordinary oversight these men were allowed to be at liberty and about his person. They determined to murder their king, but to make sure of their prey—and this circumstance shows the fear Aga inspired—persuaded another man to assist them. These three entered the monarch's tent and soon stabbed him to death. There seems some reason for suspecting that one of the leading generals, Sadek Khan

* Haji Ibrahim, at whose house Sir J. Malcolm resided in 1800, informed him that after the king had told his soldiers he would march against the Russians and cut them in pieces, he turned to him and said, "Can a man of your wisdom believe I will ever run my head against their walls of steel, or expose my irregular army to be destroyed by their cannon and disciplined troops? I know better. Their shot shall never reach me, but they shall possess no country beyond its range. They shall not know sleep; and let them march where they choose, I will surround them with a desert."

Shekaki, knew something beforehand of this deed, for he protected the assassins, and received from them the crown jewels, including the celebrated diamonds, the Taj-Mah (or crown of the moon) and the Derya-i-noor (or sea of light).

Thus perished, by the assassin's hand, one of the ablest of Persia's rulers, in the sixty-third year of his age. He was the slave of personal ambition, but the chief part of those schemes, which he revolved in his mind during the enforced inaction of his residence at Shiraz, he lived to see brilliantly fulfilled. It is to be deeply regretted that so many deeds of blood distinguished his reign; but the kingdom he left to his successor has, with a few trifling exceptions, been kept together by the Kajar monarchs who followed him.

Though Sadek Khan had seized the reins of power, he was promptly suppressed by the heir to the throne, Fetteh Ali, son of Aga Mohammed's brother. The affection which Aga showed to this youth was shared by his brother, Hussein Kuli, who was now made governor of Fars, the most important post in the kingdom. Sadek Khan was defeated at Kasveen, but managed to escape with sufficient crown jewels to purchase his pardon—more than enough, we may say—for this wily man, thinking it well to be provided against a similar occurrence, did not surrender them all, those he retained being enough to redeem his life, when again in arms against his sovereign. We should mention that the young Shah was greatly assisted in succeeding to the throne by the active measures taken by his uncle's prime minister, the wise Haji Ibrahim. He needed able advisers, for Hussein Kuli Khan, his brother, the governor of Fars, revolted, followed by Nadir Mirza, the son of

Shahruckh, who seized the town of Turbat. After these had been defeated, Mohammed Khan, the son of the Zend chief Zuckee Khan, advanced from Bussorah and seized Ispahan. If, as has been stated, he only reached that city with thirty followers, it is marvellous how such a place should have surrendered to so contemptibly meagre a force. The clemency with which this monarch treated rebels in his reign is remarkable when he had his uncle Aga Mohammed's example before him. There was one exception to this mild treatment. Some time after this the old rebel, Sadek Khan, refused to send troops to Teheran as he was commanded. His sovereign, whose patience was exhausted by his conduct, ordered him to be bricked up alive in a chamber, for he had once taken an oath not to shed his blood.

An anecdote related by Mr. Watson shows the kind disposition of Fetteh Ali. As he was on his way to Teheran, after the campaign against Nadir Mirza, he had to pass through the desert between Bastam and Shahrood, and in one part of the journey it was found that the ladies of the harem had lost their way. The Shah and some followers started in pursuit, and they wandered so far that all their water was consumed and only a small piece of ice remained—reserved for the monarch. He saw, however, that a young chief had fainted, and with his own hands he placed the reviving morsel in his mouth.

About this time fears were entertained by the authorities of India that Zeman Shah, the chief of Affghanistan, would invade that country. The governor of Bombay accordingly sent Mehdi Ali Khan to persuade the Shah of Persia to go to war with Affghanistan. He represented to the king the

incursions of the Affghans at Lahore, and how the Persians there had been obliged to flee before them. He brought with him a letter of credentials, empowering him to make a substantial offer for the services of the Persian monarch. But when he found that the Shah was eager to attack Affghanistan, the cunning envoy substituted a more general document for this, and returned to India in triumph.

This was in 1799, and the Indian Government, pleased with the result, determined to send a more important embassy the following year. Accordingly in February, 1800, a mission under Captain (afterwards Sir John) Malcolm landed at Bushire.* Since the time of Charles II. no English diplomatist had visited the country. Captain Malcolm was especially charged to make a commercial, as well as a political treaty, for the East India Company wished to revive the old and more profitable trade with the country. In June the mission paid its respects to the young prince, Hussein Ali Mirza, the nominal ruler of Fars, of which Shiraz is the capital. At this interview a scene took place, which shows the importance of forms on such an occasion. Captain Malcolm had resided at the principal courts of India, and was "well up" in the proper ceremonies to be observed. A plan of the room, showing the place he was to

* In an account of this embassy, as well as of that ten years after, we shall follow *Sketches of Persia*, published by Murray, in 1827. Though published anonymously, this work is by Sir John Malcolm. It is very amusing to note the care he takes to conceal the authorship. In the preface he remarks: "I am no historian, therefore I did not tremble at Sir John Malcolm's ponderous quartos;" and in vol. i., 76, after relating an anecdote, says, "This story has been told by Sir John Malcolm in his history, in illustration of some of his facts or opinions; but he has taken this, and many other equally good things, from me, without ever acknowledging them. I shall therefore stand on no ceremony, when it suits my purpose, to reclaim my property."

occupy, had been furnished him. The members of the mission were to sit on a strip of felt along the left side of the room, or on the right hand of the prince, and Captain Malcolm's place was at the extreme end of this, so that his right thigh was to rest on the carpet of the prince, who, of course, occupied the upper or narrow side of the room. When the Elchee (or ambassador, as he was called) was moving to take his seat, the master of the ceremonies pointed to a lower seat, and placed himself in such a position that Captain Malcolm could not take the upper place. He did not wish to make a disturbance, in the presence of the young prince, but left earlier than he would otherwise have done. The chief minister sent a messenger to say he was sorry that the mistake had occurred, but Captain Malcolm replied that he should not be satisfied unless a written apology was forwarded to him. The minister offered to bastinado, and even put out the eyes of the master of the ceremonies, but in the end sent the required apology. To those who do not know the importance the Persians attach to forms it may appear that the Elchee was unnecessarily particular, but by the conduct of an ambassador, such a people judge of the importance of the monarch, by whom he is sent.

It was not until November 13, 1800, that the embassy entered Teheran. As nothing of importance is done in Persia without referring to the astrologers, Captain Malcolm consulted one of the most famous of these, to hear the most propitious hour on which to enter the city. The learned man after much study ascertained that half-past 2 p.m. on the above-mentioned day would do admirably, and exactly to the minute the principal gate was passed. An envoy should take care in these matters to consult the prejudices of the

people. Three days after, the mission proceeded to the Persian court, "the threshold of the world's glory;" but before noticing its reception, it may be interesting to note the impression created on Captain Malcolm, by Haji Ibrahim, the celebrated king-maker, "who, without any pretensions to military talent, and without learning sufficient to write a note or read three lines, has overcome heroes, established sovereigns on the throne of Persia, and, by his firmness and wisdom, given a peace and tranquillity to his native land beyond what it has known for a century." He was at first disappointed, when he saw, instead of the magnificent personage of his imagination, "a heavy-looking man, dressed in very plain clothes, enter the room, and proceed towards his seat, with a rolling of the body that almost approached to a waddle. His features were rather coarse, and his eyes, though clear, had nothing of the piercing or searching qualities" he had anticipated. As to his manners, they did not appear to have changed with his condition, but to be still those of a good respectable citizen of Shiraz. "But," he goes on to say, "before the half hour expired, which he passed in conversation with the Elchee, my mind had undergone another change, for there was in all he said a good sense, a sincerity, and a strength that quite convinced one of the justice of the fame he had acquired." *

When the members of the embassy were to be received by the Shah, an officer of the court was sent to arrange the dress in which they were to appear. Captain Mal-

* It is hardly necessary to say that in the above account the Elchee is Captain Malcolm himself, though he writes as if he were a third person, listening to the conversation.

colm was much amused when he produced a painting of Sir Anthony Shirley, who came to Persia in the time of Queen Elizabeth, and requested the ambassador to appear in such a costume, as His Majesty desired to follow in such points the usages of the Seffavean kings. It is difficult for Orientals to comprehend our frequent alterations in dress. It was arranged that Captain Malcolm should be received in his uniform, and other points of etiquette being settled, on November 16 the embassy entered the presence of the sovereign. We transcribe the Elchee's description of the king's appearance in his hall of audience. "He appeared to be above the middle size, his age little more than thirty, his complexion rather fair; his features were regular and fine, with an expression denoting quickness and intelligence. His beard attracted much of our attention—it was full black, and glossy, and flowed to the middle. His dress baffles all description. The ground of his robes was white; but he was so covered with jewels of an extraordinary size, and their splendour, from his being seated where the rays of the sun played upon them, was so dazzling, that it was impossible to distinguish the minute parts, which combined to give such amazing brilliancy to his whole figure."* The king received the members of the mission very generously.

* We append as a fitting companion to the above the following description by Sir R. Kerr Porter, in his *Travels*, of the same monarch, on a great ceremonial occasion: "He entered the saloon from the left, and advanced to the foot of it with an air and step which belonged entirely to a sovereign. I never before had beheld anything like such perfect majesty; and he seated himself on his throne with the same indescribable unaffected dignity. Had there been any assumption in his manner, I could not have been so impressed. I should then have seen a man, though a king, theatrically acting his state; here I beheld a sovereign feeling himself as such, and he looked the majesty he felt. He was one blaze of jewels, which literally dazzled the sight on

On another occasion the rich presents brought by the embassy were offered. Great care was taken to have these described by a term which should indicate that they were not to be considered in the light of tribute or offerings from an inferior power, which difficulty was got over by describing them as rarities sent from the British ruler of India in token of his regard. Fetteh Ali asked the ambassador the truth of a certain extraordinary report that he had heard—viz., whether the King of England had only one wife. Captain Malcolm replied that he had been rightly informed, saying, "Our gracious King, George the Third, is an example to his subjects of attention to morality and religion in this respect, as in every other." The King laughingly answered, "This may be all very proper, but I

first looking at him; but the details of his dress were these: A lofty tiara of three elevations was on his head, which shape appears to have been long peculiar to the crown of the great king. It was entirely composed of thickly-set diamonds and pearls, rubies and emeralds, so exquisitely disposed, as to form a mixture of the most beautiful colours in the brilliant light reflected from its surface. Several black feathers like the heron plumes were intermixed with the resplendent aigrettes of this truly imperial diadem, whose bending points were finished with pear-shaped pearls of an immense size. The vesture was of gold tissue, nearly covered with a similar disposition of jewelry; and, crossing the shoulders, were two strings of pearls, probably the largest in the world. I call his dress a vesture, because it set close to his person, from the neck to the bottom of the waist, showing a shape as noble as his air. At that point it devolved downwards in loose drapery, like the usual Persian garment, and was of the same costly materials with the vest. But for splendour nothing could exceed the broad bracelet round his arms and the belt which encircled his waist; they actually blazed like fire when the rays of the sun met them; and when we know the names derived from such excessive lustre, we cannot be surprised at seeing such an effect. The jewelled band on the right arm was called 'the mountain of light' and that on the left 'the sea of light.'" These names were of course derived from the celebrated diamonds contained in the bracelets.

certainly should not like to be king of such a country.”* He was very inquisitive respecting English government and customs. On one occasion he was much puzzled—and no wonder—by the phrase “liberty of the subject,” used by Captain Malcolm. He was told that it meant that no man was so high in England as to be able to do anything contrary to the law of the land, and no man so low, that he might do everything not contrary to the law. Fetteh Ali thought the power enjoyed by his Britannic Majesty had permanence, but not enjoyment. Looking round, he asked several high chiefs if he could not cut their heads off when he pleased. “Assuredly, point of admiration of the world, if it is your pleasure,” they answered. “That,” said the king, turning to Captain Malcolm, “is real power, but then it has no permanence. When I am gone, my sons will fight for the crown, and all will be confusion; there is, however, one consolation, Persia will be governed by a soldier.” The Shah was a poet, and his book of odes was thought a wonderful production by the courtiers; but then it had been written by a king! The Shah held two courts every day, but he found time to devote many hours to the pleasures of the chase, of which he was very fond.

Mohammedans are compelled to rise early in order to say their first prayer at the dawn of day. Fetteh Ali was no exception to this rule; and after holding a levee, and chatting with his favourites, he breakfasted about ten, the dishes forming this repast and the dinner, served about eight in the evening, being of pure gold, and sealed up by the chief

* Fetteh Ali had at this period about one hundred children. Mr. Binning, writing in 1850, says there were descendants of that monarch then earning their living as tradesmen and mechanics.

officer in the household, to prevent poison. His Majesty always ate alone, but, as a great mark of honour, sometimes sent dishes which had been opened in his presence to great personages. His seraglio consisted of about eight hundred ladies, four of which were wives—no Mohammedan is allowed to have more—who had separate suites of apartments. Some time before the visit of the embassy one of the king's favourite ladies of the harem had died, and her loss greatly affected the monarch. She had been a dancing-girl at Shiraz, but was extremely intelligent as well as lovely. Fetteh Ali, on her death, ordered her to be buried near the holy shrine of Shah Abd-ul-Azeem, near the capital, and it was his pleasure frequently to visit her tomb.

We regret to have to allude to a circumstance which occurred about two years after the departure of the mission. This was the execution of the great minister Haji Ibrahim. There are generally those about the person of an eastern monarch to poison his mind against a great subject, suggesting that his power is dangerous to his king, and that he is only looking out for an opportunity to dethrone him. The influential position occupied by Haji Ibrahim, combined with his fearless manner and blunt speech, had raised powerful enemies against him, who were determined upon his fall. The subject of their malice well knew their intentions, and before the departure of Captain Malcolm said to him, "Your arrival has delayed for a time the execution of their designs, but it is only for a short period. I could easily save myself; but Persia would again be plunged in warfare. My object has been to give my country a king; I cared not whether he was a Zend or a Kajar, so that there was an end of eternal distraction. I have seen

enough of these scenes of blood ! I will be concerned in no more of them. I hope I have made my peace with God, and shall therefore die contented." Captain Malcolm asked him to treat the other ministers with more respect, but he said that such conduct would only hasten his fate, for his enemies would conclude that such an alteration in his behaviour only covered some deep design. In Persian state affairs the mother of the king generally has great influence.* In this instance she used it for the preservation of Haji, well knowing his worth, and the impossibility of replacing so able an administrator. At her death, however, his enemies triumphed, for he was killed, and on the same day, according to Persian custom, all his brothers and sons were either put to death or deprived of sight.†

In the first of Persia's disastrous wars with Russia, which lasted from 1805 to 1813, she was compelled to give up most of the Caspian provinces, and agreed to maintain no navy on the Caspian Sea.‡ Georgia and Daghistan passed under Russian rule. Knowing the confusion which often took place in Persia on the decease of a monarch, Fetteh Ali induced the Russians to agree to aid the accession of the crown prince to the throne.

* It will be remembered that it was entirely owing to the influence of the mother of the present Shah, Nasser-ed-Din, that he consented to the death of his great minister Mirza Teki Khan, the ablest Prime Minister who ever served a Persian monarch.

† On this first visit Captain Malcolm took an electrifying machine, which much astonished the Persians. A learned philosopher of the country, however, said that the effects produced were upon the nervous only, and would not take place in his case. He was asked to a public trial, and the alarm of the poor philosopher upon receiving a severe shock was ludicrous.

‡ This was settled by the Treaty of Gulistan, signed October 12, 1813.

CHAPTER III.

HISTORY: French Ambassador sent to Persia—Embassies from India and England—Abul Hussein Khan's visit to France and England—War declared with Russia—Massacre of Russian Mission—Death of Abbas Mirza—Decease of Fetteh Ali—Mohammed Shah—Residence of Persian Princes in London—Affghanistan Campaign—Siege of Herat—Disputes with England—The Báb and his followers—Accession of Nasser-ed-Din—His Prime Minister, Teki Khan—Death of the Báb—Execution of Teki Khan—Another Affghanistan Campaign—Fall of Herat—War with England—Death of the Heir Apparent—Sir H. Rawlinson at the Persian Court—Reform in Administration—Famine—European Tour of the Shah—Concession to Baron Reuter—Return of the Shah—First Railway.

WE must now retrace our steps a little, to notice the rise of other complications in Persian affairs. The Emperor Napoleon thought that, in the event of an invasion of India which he contemplated, the aid of Persia would be very important to him. His ambassador arrived in Teheran in May, 1806,* and was able to conclude a treaty which was signed about a year after. The Indian government was naturally alarmed, but it was not until 1808 that Colonel Malcolm left for Persia. When he landed in the country he was ordered not to advance to the capital, and in this emergency he determined to return to India. About this

* Five months after this England, Russia, Prussia, and Saxony formed the fourth coalition against France, and on October 14 Napoleon defeated the Prussians at the battle of Jena.

time the English government, impressed with the importance of the whole affair, sent Sir Harford Jones from London. He succeeded in reaching the Persian capital, and so impressed the Shah with the importance of the English alliance, that the French envoy, General Gardanne, was requested to leave the country. The war with Russia had not then been concluded, and we agreed to pay Persia £200,000 for the Russian war. This treaty was concluded March 12, 1809. As the Indian treasury had to furnish that subsidy, the Governor-general determined to send a mission to the Persian Court. Mr. Watson points out the "regrettable jealousy and want of common action between the embassy sent to Persia from England, and the British authorities in India. Sir Harford Jones was accused of having used to the Persians language calculated to lower in their estimation the dignity of the Government of India, and in return that Government did its best to lower the estimation in which the king's ambassador was held at the Persian Court, *by dishonouring the bills which he drew on Calcutta.*" We can quite understand that the presence of these two envoys puzzled the Persians, as they were both supposed to represent virtually the same government.

General Malcolm (for he had been advanced to that honour) arrived at Sultaneah, an elevated plain on which the summer residence of the Court was situated, in 1810. The Shah was extremely kind, and decorated the ambassador with the order of the Lion and Sun which he had created for the purpose. General Malcolm says that this usage of creating honours of knighthood to confer upon Christians commenced with the court of Constantinople. The Shah had created the order of the Sun for the

French envoy, General Gardanne, and therefore when it was offered to Sir Harford Jones he declined it. So also did the present ambassador ; and the king, to get out of the difficulty, instituted the order of the Lion and the Sun, which was accepted. Not content with this, the Shah also conferred on General Malcolm the title of Khan, or lord, and Sipah Silar, or general, and with his own hands fastened upon his breast a diamond star as a special mark of his approbation.

Use was made of this mission by the Indian Government to gain information concerning the countries between the Black Sea and the Indus. Reports of extreme value were made by such men as Pottinger, Kinneir, and Monteith, respecting those countries, previously imperfectly known.

On his first mission, General Malcolm had taken great notice of the youngest son of Haji Ibrahim ; on the second, the Shah directed that the youth should be sent to meet the ambassador. This attention was meant kindly, but the appearance of the poor child's sightless eyes must have given the general great pain. We have mentioned that on the first embassy an electrifying machine was taken, to amuse the people ; on the second, they were more charmed by a magic lantern. So successful was it, as an implement of diplomacy, that many great persons who would not otherwise have visited the general, could not resist the temptation of coming to see the phantasmagoria. It was, however, suggested to him that great people ought not to be amused by such trifles. His reply was very pertinent : " The man who is always wise is a fool, and he above all others is most foolish who, entrenched in forms and observances, neglects to use every honest meant

with which human nature supplies him to promote fair and honourable objects." The love of amusement, which is a characteristic of the Persians, should always be taken into consideration by an embassy.

It was found necessary in 1814 to modify the terms of the former treaty, and in that year Mr H. Ellis went from England, to arrange such modifications. The chief alteration was that the subsidy before named should not be paid if Persia began a war upon either of her European neighbours. She agreed to do her best to prevent any power passing through the country to invade India. "From this time," says Mr. Watson,* "the Persian court became the place of residence for the ministers plenipotentiary, from the sovereigns of England and Russia; and as Persia was thus assumed to be a civilized power, she was obliged henceforth to conform herself in some respects to the practices of civilized nations. The mere residence of foreign ministers at his capital of itself greatly tended to increase the stability of the throne of the Shah, whilst it conferred a greater dignity upon his court than it was in his power to purchase with all his treasure." He observes that this intercourse between Persia and European nations has been most beneficial to the country, for certain deeds of cruelty have been prevented by the threatened withdrawal of the embassies.

Five years after the visit of Mr. Ellis to Persia, Haji Mirza Abul Hussein Khan, the nephew of the late prime minister, was sent on a diplomatic mission to France and England. It appears that he was not received at the court

* Mr. R. G. Watson's *History of Persia, from the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century to 1858*, is very valuable, chiefly for its diplomatic facts. Mr. Watson was formerly attached to her Majesty's legation.

of the former country, because he was instructed to insist that the king should stand up in his presence, and so receive the letter from the Shah, and also that he must sit beside his Majesty. The former of these conditions could not be complied with, because of the gout of the king, and the latter was contrary to court etiquette. He said he should be decapitated on his return, if these conditions were not carried out, and so he could not be received at all.* He was successful in England, so we presume the Prince Regent agreed to the above stipulations, and the envoy saved his head.†

* *Notes and Queries*, 1st series, XII. 16.

† Mr. Morier has described the entry of the Ambassador into London. One of the public coaches was hired to convey the Ambassador's servants from Plymouth to London, and when four of them had got inside, having seated themselves cross-legged, they would not allow that there could be room for more, although the coach was calculated to take six. They armed themselves from head to foot with pistols, swords, and each a musket in his hand, and thus encumbered got into the coach. His excellency himself greatly enjoyed the novelty of a carriage, and was delighted at the speed with which it travelled, particularly at night, although he was surprised that all this was done without a guide. But as they approached London troubles commenced. "We were met," says Mr. Morier, "at two posts from London by two gentlemen of the Foreign Office, who greeted the Ambassador on his arrival; but he grew very anxious as we proceeded, and seemed to be looking out for an 'istakbalt,' or a deputation headed by some man of distinction, which, after the manner of his own country, he expected would be sent to meet him. In vain we assured him that no disrespect was intended, and that our modes of doing honour to ambassadors were different to those of Persia; our excuses seemed only to grieve him the more; and although to a foreigner the interest of the road greatly increased as we approached the city, yet he requested to have both the glasses of his carriage drawn up, for he said that he did not understand the nature of such an entry, which appeared to him more like smuggling a bale of goods into a town than the reception of a public envoy. He who had witnessed the manner in which our ambassadors had been received in Persia, particularly the *levée en masse* of the inhabitants who were sent out to meet him at every place where he stopped, was surprised to see the little notice that he himself, in the same situation in England, had attracted, and the total independence of all ranks of people.

The ostensible object of this mission was to hear who was to pay the subsidy.

Persia had a dispute on a frontier question with Turkey, but this was settled by the treaty of Erzrourm, July 28, 1823. A much more serious disagreement on a like matter soon arose with Russia. The treaty of Gulistan which was signed at the conclusion of the late war was worded somewhat loosely, and disputes respecting its interpretation appeared late in 1825. It will be remembered that on the 1st of December the Emperor Alexander of Russia died at Taganvoy, and Nicholas I. succeeded. Early in the next year, Prince Menchikoff, at the request of the emperor, proceeded to Teheran in order to arrange matters satisfactorily. He was unable to do so, and after protracted negotiations, war was declared September 28th, 1826. In Persia this was decidedly popular. The Persians longed to win back the provinces which they had lost in the late struggle. At first they were very successful, but this was before the Russians had been able to get the chief part of their forces into the country. When General Paskiewitch appeared on the scene all was changed. The Persians were chiefly commanded by the sons of the king; but the war was so expensive, that at a critical time Fetteh Ali refused to grant any more supplies. The fact was, as years advanced, the Persian Shah became extremely avaricious; and though at first, in the hope of regaining all the lost provinces, he opened his treasury, when reverses came upon his arms he declined

Although he found a fine house and splendid establishment ready to receive him in London, and although a fine collation was laid out on the morning of his arrival, nothing could revive his spirits, so much had he been disappointed at the mode of his reception."—*Pall Mall Gazette*, June 19, 1873.

to expend any more money. The Russians, to the king's great dismay, advanced on Tabreez, the great trading city of Persia, and the capital of the richest province in the country (Azerbaijan).^{*} The city made no resistance. The Shah now desired peace. The Russians required the cession of Erivan and the country to the Araxes, and what, perhaps, the Shah felt more, a money payment of four millions. The territory was ceded by the treaty of Turkmanchai † (signed February 21st, 1828), but the money payment was afterwards somewhat reduced. An event occurred the same year which seemed likely to lead to another serious breach between the two countries.

As Russia and Persia were now at peace, M. Grebaïodoff was sent as resident minister from the former country. He had not been long there before the chief eunuch of the royal harem came to the mission, and stated that he wished to return to his native province, Erivan. This being now Russian territory, the inhabitants of Teheran felt annoyed. As may be supposed, the animosity felt for the Russians before the last war was increased by their success, and only required a trifle of this kind to display itself. The Russian Minister very foolishly asked for two Armenian women from the ceded provinces to be delivered from the seclusion of a citizen's house. Nothing could now restrain the crowd, who rushed to the Mission House, sacked it, and murdered the Russian ambassador and all

^{*} This war is described at considerable length by Mr. Fowler in his *Three Years in Persia*, II. chap. ix. Many of the details were given to him by Abbas Mirza himself.

† The terms of this treaty are given in Mr. Watson's *History*, p. 239. As the line of the frontier was then carefully laid down, and still remains in force, we advise our readers to refer to it in that volume.

the members of the mission.* The Shah now dreaded the vengeance of the Czar, who it was expected would send a large force to ravage the country, and take a fearful revenge. After a great deal of consideration it was decided to send a son of the Crown Prince to visit that potentate, and, if possible, to disarm his wrath. To the great astonishment of the envoy and his suite, the Czar's wrath was easily appeased. It did not probably suit his purpose then to quarrel with Persia.

In 1830 some severe shocks of an earthquake were felt in different parts of the country. Three years after, to the great grief of the Shah, his son, Abbas Mirza, died. He was the favourite son of his immense family, and had been selected as his successor, though Mohammed Ali Mirza was his eldest son. The young prince had been very successful in a campaign in Khorassan, and had only just returned from it when he was seized with his death illness. As might naturally be supposed, the arrangement by which he had been made *Veli Aked*, or heir apparent, had been greatly to the dissatisfaction of his brother. Unlike most countries, in Persia it has always been the custom for the reigning monarch to select his successor from his numerous family; and though it has frequently happened that the eldest has been chosen, the king was perfectly at liberty to fix upon any son he pleased.

The concluding years of the reign of Fetteh Ali were disturbed by the conduct of his sons. In the very last year of his life, 1834, he set out for the province of Fars to compel his son, Hussein Ali Mirza, the governor-general

* This occurred February 12th, 1829. See Appendix D. for extract from letter of the Shah to his son, Abbas Mirza, on this affair.

of that province, to pay the arrears of tribute. That prince, who was only waiting for the death of his father to seize the throne, would not pay the monies which he knew would be so useful to him in the event of a civil war. We have seen how Fetteh Ali lost territory rather than supply his sons with money to carry on a war, and as years advanced he became still more avaricious. But he did not live to punish his rebellious son, for he was compelled to halt, at Ispahan, in October, 1834, and there, on the twenty-third day of that month, he succumbed to a fever, having then reached the age of sixty-eight years. His remains were removed to the celebrated mosque of Koom, the burial-place of Seffavean and Kajar shahs. Fetteh Ali had parted with gold—a great thing for him to do—to ornament the dome of his destined burial-place. The great sanctity of the place is derived from the tomb of Fatima, the daughter of Imam Riza, called the Virgin of Koom, and the royal tombs are placed in subordinate chapels, richly adorned with coloured marbles, ivory, fragrant smelling woods, and other Oriental products. As in the mediæval sanctuaries of Europe priests chanted services for the repose of the souls of the departed, so at Koom the Koran was continually read, and prayers offered by bands of priests, who relieved each other at intervals.

The ceremonies connected with the interment of the king had no sooner taken place than it was seen that the rightful heir to the throne, Mohammed Mirza, son of Abbas, the late heir apparent, was not destined to occupy the throne without a struggle. The young prince's uncle, Hussein Ali, the governor-general of Fars, was able from his position to seize all the late king's possessions which he

had taken with him. But at the same time the governor of Teheran "improved the occasion" by seizing the late Shah's wealth accumulated in the capital. Both these were sons of the late king, but Mohammed—to make a long story short—was raised to the throne in January, 1835, being greatly assisted by Sir John Campbell, the British minister at the Persian court.

Before referring to some of the features of the reign of Mohammed Shah we will now notice the number of Fetteh Ali's family, and refer to his three grandsons who visited London in 1835, and were the first Asiatic princes who ever came to this country. It is believed that Fetteh Ali had the largest number of children ever born to a man. Like a pious Mohammedan, he only had four wives, but his harem generally contained from 800 to 1000 ladies. By these he had 130 sons and 150 daughters, and it is believed that at the time of his death his descendants numbered *five thousand souls*. The three grandsons who merit notice were the sons of Hussein Ali, the governor of Fars, who aspired to the throne. The princes, Riza Kuli Mirza, Nejeff Kuli Mirza, and Timour Mirza, were at Shiraz when their father attempted to seize the throne. They were able to make their escape from the city.* After many adventures, they reached a place of safety, and were able to communicate with their father, whose rebellion had been crushed. They were advised by him to go to

* Respecting the word *mirza*, it is interesting to note that when *prefixed* to the name of any person it simply means that the person can read and write, and prefers civil occupation to military. When it follows the name it denotes a prince of the blood royal. Sir J. Malcolm says a *mirza*, in the former case, of course, may be called a man of business, and observes that every officer in the army and every magistrate of a village has his *mirza*.

England, and arrived here in 1835.* Hussein Ali thought his sons would be safer here until the political horizon in Persia was clearer. It may be interesting to note the physical appearance and temperament of these young princes, as given by Mr. Fraser. That gentleman was in almost constant attendance upon them when they visited the houses of the nobility, or places of public amusement. The eldest, Riza Kuli, was "tall, and of a very pleasing countenance, a man of very amiable disposition, gentlemanly feelings and manners, and a great deal of innate dignity of character, which evinces itself in his general deportment and conduct, and a shrinking and almost morbid sensitiveness to all that in his opinion may tend to affect his good name." Nejeff Kuli, "of a small and slender person, his light hair, blue eyes, and peculiar features announce his Georgian blood, while the disadvantage of extreme short-sightedness, and the long beard, which, unlike his brothers, he cherishes with care, united with a natural shyness of disposition, render his appearance and address less agreeable than those of his brothers, and tinge them with an awkward uncouthness. . . . Yet this ungainly exterior covers more talent and learning than is possessed by either of the others." And Timour, "twenty-six years of age, tall and slender, yet muscular and perfectly well made: his carriage and deportment declare at once his character, which is that of a fearless, reckless, joyous young soldier, caring little for anything that has not reference to hunting or to arms, or social and not very temperate enjoyments. Horses, dogs, hawks,

* See Fraser's *Narrative of the Residence of the Persian Princes in London*, 1835-36. 2 vols. Bentley, 1838.

guns, swords and pistols are his passion, to which may be added—no uncommon thing in youth—a warm advocate for female beauty, and delight in parties and pleasure, and those feasts where the wine-cup circulate freely.” Such were the characteristics of the young princes who then came to London. Englishmen, who are naturally fond of the sea and of travelling generally, cannot understand the horror which the former excites in the breast of the Persian; and when added to this we consider how strange the world must appear to those who go out of their country for the first time, we must admire the courage of these princes in coming here. They had also to give up many of the luxurious habits to which they were accustomed.

They saw, and were much pleased with, the usual sights of London: a review in Hyde Park, the panorama of London at the Coliseum in Regent’s Park, the Thames Tunnel, and Madame Tussaud’s—the latter especially delighting them much. Persians are never tired of talking about the splendour of the palaces of their nobles, but this generally consists in quantities of tawdry gilding and inlaid glass. These princes were no exception to this rule, but they were very much struck with Windsor Castle and the chaste grandeur of the magnificent apartments.

The Persians are very fond of making fine speeches, and excel in the use of flattering, complimentary language. When the English ladies used to converse with the princes through the interpreter, they showed they were not behind their countrymen. “Tell these ladies,” said one of them, “that our Persian women are not like those of England—educated, accomplished, fitted to be companions

to their husbands ; they can do little except embroider and look after their slaves, or cook a dinner. Now, your English ladies are as well educated as yourselves, and are full of accomplishments ; they retain their beauty so well that, after having had a large family, they are still lovely and blooming. Wallah ! they are fresher and more lovely after forty than our women are at twenty-five. Thus one English woman is worth at least ten Persians, and so we take quantity to make up for quality. Had we English women, then one would suffice."

So different are Persian manners to those of European countries, that Mr. Fraser feared that at fashionable dinners and assemblies they would commit acts of impropriety, and draw upon themselves the ridicule of the guests. But so quick were they, in common with their countrymen generally, in imitating the habits of those around them, that no act was committed contrary to our notions of good breeding.* We should mention that Nejeff Kuli himself kept a journal, which was afterwards translated and published in England. A quotation or two will show what the princes thought of this country. "All the time of our travels in this country our eyes did not see a single handbreadth of earth, but all covered with

* Before they arrived here this was different. Timour afterwards said to Mr. Fraser, "You know our customs at dinner, and how we help ourselves without ceremony to things at a distance, if what we fancy does not happen to lie before us. I remember once, while sitting at dinner, that having nothing that pleased me within reach, I stretched over and stuck my fork into a great stewed bird at the other side of the table and brought it all dripping to my own plate, upsetting several things on the way. How Mr. F—— (the British Consul at Damascus) did stare, and then laugh ; but he explained to me that such was not the European custom, and that we always should ask for what we want, and receive a portion." (p. 147.)

delightful green, roses, and all kinds of flowers, guarded by the nightingales singing. Such air or water are scarcely in this world; indeed, what there is to be seen is enough to take away the breath. It is the first story of paradise: the majestic moon, the nightingales on the trees standing with pride, the roses resembling the cheeks of the inhabitants. In all the roads there are lanterns lighted; also the houses give out their lights from the windows—in short, our travelling in midnight was not less pleasant than that of midday.”

Of railways we read: “Steam coaches are especially applicable to England because it is small, but contains an enormous population. Therefore, in order to do away with the necessity for horses, and that the land which is sown with horse-corn may be cultivated with wheat, and that England might thereby support a much greater population, they have with their ingenious skill invented this miraculous wonder, so as to have railroads from the capital to all parts of the kingdom. The roads on which the coaches are placed are made of iron bars. The coach is so fixed that no air or wind can do it any harm, and twenty or thirty coaches may be fixed to the first in the train, and these one after the other. All that seems to draw these coaches is a box of iron in which they put water to boil. Underneath this iron box is like an urn, and from it rises the steam which gives the wonderful force; when the steam rises up the wheels take their motion, the coach spreads its wings, and the travellers are like birds. We found it very agreeable; it does not give more but even less motion than horses; whenever we came to be in sight of a

distant place, in a second we passed it." The prince-author, among his concluding observations respecting this country, observes, "If a man wishes to travel and examine the kingdom, and desires to know much about it, were he to remain here a hundred years he would be unable to see the tenth part." The father of these princes was released from prison chiefly by the request of our Government, and his sons returned to their native country with their minds enlarged by foreign travel.*

It is probable that Mohammed Shah would have had considerable difficulty in assuming the crown if it had not been for the timely aid of Sir John Campbell. The avarice of the late king had prevented the troops being properly paid, and they refused to march against the enemy. Fetteh Ali died October 23, 1834, and, thanks to an advance by the British Government of £20,000, the troops were able to quit Tabreez exactly a month after. Disheartened by the desertion of their men and by other causes, Mohammed's uncle and brother, the competitors for the throne, surrendered after a short struggle, and the Shah was crowned at Teheran, on December 28th. In these events the representatives of England and Russia at the Persian Court were perfectly agreed. As Lord Palmerston had expressed it in a despatch to Mr. Bligh at St. Petersburg some months before: "England and Russia are both too deeply interested in maintaining the internal tranquillity of Persia, to allow either power to be indifferent to

* We believe the princes are now living at Bagdad. Timour was for some time after his return to Persia governor of the country round Kanzeroon; and Mr. Binning went to visit the Baghi Nazar, a garden outside the town, which was that of his residence when there. (*Two Years, &c.*, I. 192.)

complications which might tend to throw that country into a state of confusion and civil war." * Sir John Campbell was recalled, and Mr. Ellis sent to Persia. He was particularly instructed to warn the Persian Government not to make war against the Affghans.

Under date November 13, 1835, Mr. Ellis told Lord Palmerston that the Shah "has very extended schemes of conquest in the direction of Affghanistan, and in common with all his subjects conceives that the right of sovereignty over Herat and Kandahar is as complete now as in the reign of the Seffavean dynasty. This pretension is much sustained by the success of his father, Abbas Mirza, in the Khorassan campaign, and by the suggestions of Colonel Borowski." Abbas Mirza had made Prince Kamran of Affghanistan agree to pay the Shah of Persia 10,000 tomans annually and to raze to the ground the fort of Gorian. This he had not done, but taking advantage of the confusion caused by the late Shah's death, he had penetrated into Khorassan, and carried away 12,000 prisoners, and sold them as slaves. "Under such circumstances," said Mr. Ellis to Lord Palmerston, "even if the British Government was not restrained by the ninth article of the existing treaty from interfering between the Persians and Affghans, it would be difficult to oppose an attack upon Herat, or to define the exact limits to which hostilities were to be carried against Kamran Mirza; but an attempt to annex Kandahar and Ghizni to the Persian dominions upon pretensions derived from the time of Nadir Shah, has no such justification, and

* Dated June 16, 1834. (Correspondence relating to the Affairs of Persia and Affghanistan, 1834-39. Presented to both Houses of Parliament.)

could not be looked upon with indifference by the British Government." * Early in this dispute it seems to have been felt that Russia was not acting as heretofore in accordance with England, but Lord Palmerston was satisfied with the explanation given by that power of her share in the matter. In the summer of 1836 the young king, burning for military laurels, and having got together sufficient troops as he thought for the subjugation of Kamran, marched for his enemies' dominions. The Turkomans harassed him upon the march, and supplies became so short, that the Shah was obliged to return to Persia, and defer the expedition until next year. The city of Herat, the most important in Affghanistan, was reached November 23, 1837. For nearly ten months, that is, until September 9, 1838, the siege continued.†

Mr. McNeill had succeeded Mr. Ellis as envoy at the Persian court, and from the camp at Herat numerous despatches were sent by him to the Foreign Office. We are tempted to make two extracts from these, contained in the Blue Book from which we have before quoted,

* Correspondence relating to the Affairs of Persia and Affghanistan, 1834-39. Presented to both Houses of Parliament, pp. 4, 5. Our space will not of course allow us to enter at any length upon the negotiations which took place between Persia and Great Britain on this subject. Those curious in the matter will find them in the Blue Book before mentioned.

† The population was reduced from 70,000 to about 10,000, a proof of the severity of the siege. Lieutenant Pottinger, of the East India Company's Artillery, most ably directed the defence. The Persian troops, the besiegers, were commanded by Colonel Simonich, the Russian minister. The Russians were so sure of the success of the Shah against Herat, that they had collected a force at Orenburg, which in 1839 marched against Khiva. This force consisted of about 15,000 men, and was commanded by General Paroffski. It signally failed in its purpose, and during a short campaign many men perished in the snow.

as they show the importance this country attached to the stability of Herat and the unquestionable interference of Russia. April 11, 1838, Mr. McNeill says: "I continue to be of opinion that the fall of Herat would destroy our position in Afghanistan, and place all, or nearly all, that country under the influence of Russia and Persia. I need not repeat to your Lordship my opinion as to the effect which such a state of things would necessarily have on the internal tranquillity and security of British India. The evidence of concert between Persia and Russia for purposes injurious to British interests is unequivocal, and the magnitude of the evil with which we are threatened is in my estimation immense." Under date April 11, 1838, he writes: "The question of Herat seems to be the question of all Afghanistan; and if the place should fall without any attempt having been made to save it, I feel convinced that the moral influence of that event would have a most prejudicial effect on our national reputation in all these countries; for it is no secret to any one that the British Government has been desirous to prevent its fall; and that Russia, on the contrary, has been solicitous to see it in the hands of Persia. All Central Asia will regard it as a question between the greater Powers, whose views, etc., are so publicly spoken of, that I did not converse with a villager between Teheran and that place who did not ask me whether the Russians did not favour, and the English oppose, the Shah's enterprise against Herat." Mr. McNeill did everything he could to bring about an arrangement, and soon after the second of the above despatches was written he had nearly succeeded in moving the Shah to consent to a treaty.

But the governor of Herat called himself *Kamran Shah*, which naturally annoyed the Shah, and the negotiations were suspended. In September the siege was abandoned, but the Shah's troops held the fortress of Ghorian, and occupied parts of Afghanistan.

For the next three months disputes between the Shah's Government and the British envoy took place, and we quite agree with Mr. Fowler when he says that Mr. McNeill in this case "seemed determined to be dissatisfied."* The Shah had stated under a document in his own handwriting that the demands of the British Government would be acceded to, though he doubtless felt annoyed that his plans had to be abandoned; and England was very unpopular as the advocate of Afghanistan. But our minister made a disturbance about an alleged affront offered to one of his servants, and on the 3rd of January, 1839, he left Persia, and so for a time our diplomatic relations with the country ceased. So anxious was the Shah to resume such intercourse, that he sent Hussein Khan here soon afterwards; and though he was not received by Her Majesty, Lord Palmerston gave him a memorandum of the demands of the Government. It was not, however, until two years after that Persia agreed to this unrestrictedly, and Sir John McNeill returned there in October, 1841.

On May 8, 1839, Shah Shuja had been placed on the throne of Cabul by the British, thus deposing Dost Mohammed Khan. This arose out of the Shah's attempt at Herat. Two years and a half after (November 2, 1841) a revolt against the English broke out, attended

* *Three Years in Persia*, by James Fowler, Esq., II. 213.

by a terrible massacre. Sir A. Burnes and Sir W. H. McNaughten and many other officers and men were murdered, and the remainder of the English force was glad to conclude an engagement to leave the country. This they were to do on January 5, 1842; but the natives were so furious that the treaty was broken, that only four persons out of 5000 reached Jellalabad.* It was the news of this terrible catastrophe in India that induced the Russians to resume their suspended operations in Persia, and they soon established a naval station at Ashurada, an island in the Gulf of Asterabad, and otherwise extended their influence.

It is in the reign of Mohammed Shah that we first hear of the founder of the religious sect, the Bābis. Syed Ali Mohammed was his name, and he boasted descent from the Prophet, his namesake. At first he appears to have been content to be a most enthusiastic Mohammedan, but the rigorous practice of the rites of that creed did not satisfy him. He said the sun had no power over him, and accordingly made it his practice to stand for hours bareheaded, exposed to the full glare of its rays. It is probable that the process disordered his mind, for he soon turned into a fanatic of a very advanced type. He gave out that he was the *Bāb*, or door to the knowledge of God, and his followers increased with the extravagance of his pretensions. In his person, he soon after said, Mohammed had revisited the earth, and also that he was an incarnation of God. At Bushire, where he first

* General Pollock recaptured Cabul in September, 1842, and the great bazaar, one of the first of the kind in Central Asia, was destroyed. In October the British troops left Affghanistan.

proclaimed these extraordinary statements, his success was great. He then determined to go to Shiraz, and sent his naïb to give out that he was coming. Hussein Khan, whose mission to England we have before mentioned, was governor-general of Fars, and therefore resided at Shiraz. The Bāb could make no impression on Hussein, who invited him to describe his tenets before the chief priests and influential personages of the city. When, at their request, he wrote them down in a language with which they were not acquainted, the so-called descendant of the Deity was ordered to be bastinadoed and imprisoned. It is remarkable that his doctrines spread, notwithstanding this severe treatment. The Bāb's naïb employed himself in spreading the doctrines of his master, and converts were made in all parts of Persia. The Government became alarmed, and a decree was issued that all who adopted the creed of the son of a grocer of Shiraz should be put to death. The Bābis murdered some of the priests, and a severe persecution followed. The heroic manner with which the Bābis met their fate materially added to the number of adherents of the religion, and these included some priests of eminence. Mr. Watson, in his *History of Persia*, points out that Bābism in its infancy was the cause of a greater sensation than that which was produced by our Lord, as described by Josephus, for that historian simply says, "And the tribe of Christians, so named from Him (Christ), are not extinct to this day." We shall have occasion to refer to this sect again when treating of the present Shah.

Mohammed Shah forbade the governors of provinces to torture his subjects. The intention was good, but it

is to be feared that it had little effect in the case of distant provinces, where great cruelties had been practised upon the people.* Another of his enactments deserves to be mentioned. At the request of the British Government he prohibited the importation of African slaves into Persia.

Considerable progress was made during this reign in successful cultivation of the mulberry, for the purpose of supplying food for the silkworm. It is interesting to remember that until 551 all silk came from China, but in that year two Nestorian monks of Persia brought some of the eggs from the former country, and from that period silk was produced, as well as manufactured, in Europe. In the reign of Mohammed Shah the mulberry was chiefly cultivated in the province of Kerman. On September 4, 1848, in the fortieth year of his age, and in the fourteenth year of his reign, died Mohammed Shah, at the Mahomediah Palace, in Shimar.† He was interred at Koom. The painful disease to which he was subject for many years rendered him irritable, and to that is doubtless due many of his acts of cruelty. His reign on the whole was mild and beneficial to his subjects, though he was intolerant in religious matters.

As Sir John Campbell had been instrumental in securing the accession of Mohammed Shah, so Colonel Farrant, an English officer serving in Persia, aided Nasser-ed-Din, the eldest son of the late monarch, in gaining the throne. At

* After the decree, however, the British minister was the means of one of the offending governors being severely punished, and others, fearing his punishment, were obliged to be more humane.

† The palace is now in ruins. In Persia no son will, if he can help it, reside in the house in which his father died.

the time of his father's decease the heir-apparent was only nineteen years of age, and was at his government of Azerbaijan. The early removal of the prince destined for the throne to a distant province, is a general custom in Persia. Though by that means he becomes initiated into the forms of government, and early learns to command, the custom is not an unmixed good, for the young prince is removed at a very early age from the influence of his mother, the only person, as has been remarked, who cares sufficiently for his interests to correct him when he deserves it.

Colonel Farrant sent messengers to Tabreez, where the Crown Prince was, to inform him of his father's death, and held the capital until he should arrive. This was very necessary, for in a country like Persia the kingdom is generally in a state of confusion, until some one is powerful enough to put down all the claimants to the throne who then appear. On this occasion, several towns seized the opportunity to revolt, and bands of disaffected persons assembled in various parts. The Queen Mother, a woman of great strength of mind, helped materially to crush the insurgents, and place her son firmly on the throne. The young Shah entered Teheran on October 20, 1848, and was crowned on the same day. He was doubly a Kajar, if we may use the expression, for his mother was of that tribe as well as his father. It was not necessarily the case that the mother of the Crown Prince should be of noble blood, for the kings of Persia have frequently espoused peasant women, and the vigour of the royal family has been attributed to that circumstance.

It is greatly to the credit of the young king, that he should have seen in one of his suite an admirable Prime

Minister. Mirza Teki Khan was not a man of high birth. In fact, his father had been cook to the late Shah's Prime Minister. His military knowledge he gained whilst in the service of the commander-in-chief, and went with him to St. Petersburg, when the unfortunate murder of the Russian minister, and members of the mission, made it necessary for some distinguished personage to proceed to the Russian court and propitiate the Czar. Afterwards becoming a mirza, or writer, he acquired business-like habits which were of immense service to him. The young Shah offered him the prime ministership with the title of Sedr-Azem; but though he performed the duties of that high office, he would only be called Amir-i-Nizam, or Commander-in-chief. A considerable revolt in Khorassan soon taxed his military capacities.

In reading the accounts of the acts and personal characteristics of this great man, one is much struck with his resemblance to Haji Ibrahim, the prime minister of Fetteh Ali. Like him, his unflinching opposition to corruption of every kind * raised him a host of enemies, who did not rest until they had accomplished his fall. Happy had it been for Persia if the Shah had refused to listen to the calumnies which were daily poured into his ear by his mother and courtiers! Like Haji Ibrahim, the Amir, being blunt in speech himself, disliked the fulsome titles and compliments with which official documents were loaded, and did everything he could to cause their discontinuance. Much time was wasted, in various interviews, by the exchange of useless

* He tried to induce officials to be content with their salaries instead of merely using their positions as means for speculation of every kind. That this was a vain hope, persons acquainted with official life in Persia will not be surprised to hear.

ceremonial and meaningless phrases, and this he tried to stop; but such customs seem to be a part of the Persian character, and therefore their eradication was a work of considerable difficulty.

The resources of the country at the time of the accession of Nasser-ed-Din, were wasted by the pensions granted on the most frivolous pretences by the late Shah, as well as by official peculation. A hard battle had the Amir to fight before he got the expenditure of the country within reasonable limits. It was not to be supposed that these salutary reforms were accomplished without adding to the Amir's already numerous band of enemies those who had been in the enjoyment of rich sinecures. Among these were some influential priests; and not content with rousing the animosity of a section of the priesthood, the Amir shocked a number of the religious—clerical and lay as we should describe them—by attempting to prevent the annual representation of the “passion” of their revered Hussein. So popular was this exhibition, that he was obliged to withdraw his prohibition; but the fact of his having opposed it added greatly to his unpopularity. But what contributed to his fall more than anything else was his reform of the army. Previous to this the soldiers were badly clothed and fed, and received their pay months, often years, after it was due. Of course, when the soldiers found themselves well clad, fed, and paid, they blessed their commander, but those about the Shah soon told him that the Amir was only raising the numbers and efficiency of the army in order that he might the better seize the reins of power.

In May, 1850, a formidable rebellion of the Bābis took place. They attempted to seize the citadel of Yezd; but fail-

ing in this, retired to Zinjan, on the road from Teheran * to Tabreez, and fortified themselves in a portion of the town. They chose this place because its chief priest was a convert to the Bāb faith, and they had many fellow believers in the town. The Bāb was there in person, and his presence animated the enthusiasm of his followers. Great was the lamentation when their beloved prophet was taken in one of the assaults of the Shah's troops; but they did not surrender. Regardless of his alleged divine origin, the Bāb's arms were tied, and a file of soldiers discharged their muskets at him. *Mirabile dictu*, the bullets only severed the ropes with which he had been tied, and when the smoke dispersed the Bāb had disappeared. Unfortunately for him, he rushed into a room in which some soldiers were, and he was therefore seized and shot. If he had taken another turning, and gained the bazaar, he might have escaped, and such a "miracle" was sufficient to have caused a religious revolution powerful enough to overturn the Mohammedan faith in Persia.

In some respects the doctrines of the Bābis resemble those of the Sufees. Bāb taught that there was no such thing as God apart from the universe, but that every part of the world was a portion of the Deity and every living thing in it. He said that virtue and vice did not exist, and strongly insisted on the equal division of property. Curiously enough, the Bābis did not profess dislike for any other faith than the Mohammedan.

But the death of Bāb did not cause the insurrection to cease. For months his followers held out in the portion of the town they had fortified, until by force of numbers they

* Zinjan is about two hundred miles from Teheran.

were all butchered. Other massacres took place in different parts of the country; but the belief spread, and at the present day even considerable numbers are known as followers of that faith.* In the same year in which the Zinjan insurrection took place seven Bābis were executed at Teheran for, it was said, attempting the life of the Amir, but those were not wanting who said that the tale was a mere pretence for getting rid of some members of the proscribed sect.

The Mohammedan priests had not calmly submitted to the infringement of their rights, which had been carried out by order of the Amir. As in the Middle Ages in Europe, various shrines and places of worship in Persia had the right of sanctuary. This, as might be supposed, was much abused, and the Amir, in the punishment of criminals, was often thwarted by their availing themselves of that right. About the time that the Bābis were defending themselves at Zinjan, the moollahs (or priests) of Tabreez arranged that a cow being conducted to the slaughter should take refuge at a shrine.† This occurred three times, to the awe of the beholders. The whole city for three days was given up to religious enthusiasm, and the shrine was considered ten times more holy than before. The Amir, however, was not to be imposed upon by such a "miracle," and some of the priests found themselves in prison, whence they were liberated, however, on promising to behave better. In May, 1851, the Shah and his court left Teheran for a

* Watson's *History of Persia*, chap. xii., and Lady Sheil's *Glimpses of Life in Persia*, 176—181. Lady S. says that "Bāb possessed a mild and benignant countenance, his manners were composed and dignified, his eloquence was impressive, and he wrote rapidly and well."

† The Shah's stable has been a sanctuary for a very long period.

visit to Ispahan. These journeys are extremely unpopular with the court officials, as well as with the inhabitants of the districts through which the huge cavalcade passes. The former have no extra allowance for such a journey, and the latter are plundered in a shameful manner by the Shah's followers. Mr. Watson tells us it occasionally happens that when the Shah announces his intention of making a "progress" to some part of his dominions, the inhabitants send him a present in money to induce him to spare them the honour. The Shah pays well himself, but his officers take care that very little of the money reaches those for whom it was intended. At the same time a few Turkomans made the Russians at their colony of Ashurada look ridiculous. This island is in the south of the Caspian Sea, and for the purpose of keeping the Turkomans in order, several vessels were maintained there. Knowing that the Russians generally drink freely on Easter Eve, a few of the "barbarians" landed on the island, and sacked the colony, taking some of the inhabitants prisoners. A war steamer near did not come to the rescue of the colonists, but merely fired off her guns in an objectless manner.

The Shah was a considerable time in reaching Ispahan, but when he did arrive the Russian mission went in imposing array to the Prime Minister's house, and demanded satisfaction for the Turkoman outrage. The members insisted that the Shah's brother, the governor of the province of Mazanderan—who had nothing whatever to do with the affair—should be recalled. To this humiliating proposal the Shah was obliged to accede. Whether that official was in any way connected with the slave trade or not, we do not know, but within a week of his recall the

Persian Government allowed the English to put down the trade by which African slaves were imported into Persia.* We have before mentioned that Mohammed Shah was induced by us to order the cessation of that vile traffic, but it had again sprung into existence.

In November the Shah gave way to the importunities of his mother and courtiers respecting the fate of Teki Khan. It is greatly to the credit of the young king that he was able for so long a time to refuse to give credence to their misrepresentations. His mother was an extremely clever woman, and took a prominent part in state affairs. In fact, the Queen Mother in Persia takes precedence over the Shah's wives, who have little or no voice in the government. The Shah valued his mother's opinion very highly, and, urged by her entreaties, determined to disgrace his minister. It is said that the Amir was not sufficiently respectful to the monarch, and frequently spoke of him with something very much like contempt. In the dead of night (November 13) the Shah summoned four hundred of his body-guard to the palace, for he was so afraid of the popularity of the Amir, that he did not dare to degrade him without taking these precautions. The Shah refused to take his life for some time, though the danger of leaving such a man at large was represented to him. It was determined to send him to live in retirement with his wife, the Shah's only sister, at Kashan. The Russian minister, Prince Dolorouky, sent members of his mission to protect him, but the Shah ordered them to quit the Amir's residence. The reason for the fatal order for the minister's

* Lady Sheil says that on the whole the condition of these slaves in Persia, who are employed in household work, is good. The more intelligent are often admitted by their masters to places of considerable trust.

execution is very uncertain. It is said to have been due to the indiscretion of the Russian minister, who said that he should receive despatches from his Government which would save Teki Khan. Aga Khan had been elevated to the vacant post, and he pointed out to the Shah that the death of the Amir would show the world that he was not the servant of Russia, and so the fate of the Amir was decided. Knowing the animosity of his enemies, the ex-minister's young wife never left her husband at Kashan; tasted his food to prevent his being poisoned, and otherwise guarded against surprise. But what could such precautions accomplish against Persian guile? The Amir was decoyed away to the bath by a false statement that the Shah had sent a dress of honour to him, preparatory to his return to favour. Those who had undertaken the vile deed were awaiting him at the bath, and he was executed January 9, 1852.

Aga Khan—who did not refuse the title of Sedr Azem—was a tolerable Prime Minister for Persia, but all classes soon discovered the value of the man they had lost, and no one more than the Shah, who has since annually observed the day of his great minister's death as one of fasting. Public officials resumed their wonted peculation, and the army soon returned to its former inefficiency.

In the same year some of the Bābis attempted the life of the Shah. On August 15 he was leaving for Elburz on a hunting excursion—for he has always been an ardent sportsman—when four persons stopped his horse, one firing at him. The Shah had the presence of mind to throw himself to the other side of his horse, and was only slightly wounded. It may seem strange that such men

should be allowed to approach the Shah on such an occasion, but it is etiquette for the guards to ride at some distance from the royal person. The four Bābis had been chosen by a powerful party of conspirators, and if successful, Persia would have been given over to a spiritual despotism. A rigorous search was now made for the conspirators, and about thirty of the chief of these were executed. The Sedr Azem feared that he should be murdered by some Bābi if he directed the execution of the thirty himself. He therefore arranged that the head of every department in the state should slay one of them.* Five or six of the chief offenders were horribly tortured, some having lighted candles placed in their bodies, which were allowed to burn until they reached the flesh. All the Bābis exhibited the greatest fortitude, and not one recanted or expressed any sorrow for the crime.

In 1851, Yah Mohammed † of Herat died, and his son sent an embassy to the Shah, offering to become his subject. This son simply desired to be relieved of all cares of government, so that he might spend his days in dissipation. The Shah saw an admirable excuse for the long-wished-for occupation of Herat, and a force was prepared under Sultan Murad Mirza. Colonel Sheil, British envoy from November, 1849, to April, 1853, in August, 1851, told the Amir that a rupture with Great Britain would be the consequence of this aggressive movement. Explanations took place which ended, about a year after the death of the Amir, in an agreement

* Dr. Cloquet, the Shah's French physician, was asked to take part in this execution. Lady Sheil says he excused himself under the plea that he had killed too many men professionally to allow him to increase their number voluntarily.

† He murdered Shah Kamran.

being signed by the Government, that Persia should send no troops to Herat unless herself attacked. This was in January, 1853, and in the same year Russia manœuvred to get Persia on her side against Turkey. The Shah thought it would be best to join Russia, the Sedr Azem inclined to the allies. An offer was actually made by Persia to join the latter, but was declined. The Russian Minister then left the Persian court.

In reference to the Shah's evident wish to ally himself with Russia, when a new envoy (Mr Murray*) was sent from England to Teheran, the *Times* said that he was going to bring the Shah on his knees. This, being reported to that monarch, annoyed him exceedingly. We may here remark that it is a popular error to suppose that the Shah is not well up in European affairs; for years an Englishman has been employed at his court to translate to him the substance of the leading European journals. Mr. Murray arrived at Teheran in 1854, and in April of the same year a treaty was signed between Persia and Russia. Mr. Murray found that his predecessor, Mr. Thomson, had appointed to the Persian secretaryship of the mission a man greatly disliked by the Government. He saw no cause to cancel the appointment, and the dispute proceeded, until matters were brought to a crisis by the seizure on the part of the prime minister of the mirza's, or secretary's wife, in November, 1855. Mr. Murray said that, if she was not released, the British mission would leave the city. The lady was not given up, and the mission

* The Hon. C. A. Murray, K.C.B., the second son of the fifth Earl of Dunmore, was in 1844 appointed Secretary of Legation at Naples; two years after Consul-general in Egypt, and in 1853 British Minister in Switzerland.

departed in the following month. The Government published an *apologia*, and accused Mr. Murray—unfoundedly, of course—of improper conduct towards the lady in question. Now in league with Russia, and with the British mission out of the way, nothing prevented the siege of Herat. Murad Mirza, the Prince of Khorassan, marched against the city at the head of between 9000 and 10,000 men, in December.

Since we last had occasion to notice Herat, Mohammed Yusaf, the son of Kamran, has replaced Saiyid Mohammed on the throne. He asked Persia to help him against a threatened attack of Dost Mohammed, of Cabul. This request was afterwards mentioned by the Persian Government, as a justification of its conduct. Before marching upon Herat, Sultan Murad defeated the force sent to oppose him at Ghorian, and occupied twenty days in besieging that place. The vizier of Mohammed Yusuf sent his master to the Persian camp as a prisoner in April, 1856.

During eight months of the last-mentioned year, in the absence of a British Mission at Teheran, diplomatic negotiations were carried on between the Persian envoy at Constantinople and Lord Stratford de Redcliffe.* As these were unsuccessful, Lord Clarendon, in September, ordered the Governor-General of India (Viscount Canning) to prepare a force to bring Persia to her senses. Then came the news of the fall of Herat (October 26), and on November 1 war was formally declared. The force embarked in thirty-four vessels, and the island of Kharg was captured on December 3. Four days after, the troops landed about twelve

* He was then ambassador at Constantinople, having succeeded Lord Ponsonby in that post in 1841. He is better known as Sir Stratford Canning.

miles from Bushire, and soon marched to that city. It was not taken, on the 10th, without a considerable resistance. Brigadier Stopford, C.B., commander of one of the two brigades, was killed.

In January, 1857, another force, under General Outram, left Bombay and joined the former division, the general taking command of the whole. The enemy was defeated on February 3, at Burazjun, nearly fifty miles from Bushire; and five days after, at Khushab, a force of 6000 infantry and 2000 cavalry was routed, though commanded by the ablest general in Persia. On March 26, at Mohamra, 13,000 Persians were beaten by 5000 Englishmen. But this was nothing compared to what was to follow. General Outram sent 300 men to pursue the enemy. On the first of April this little company came in sight of *ten thousand* of the enemy, including 2000 of the best cavalry in Persia. This large force did not wait until the small one opposed to it came to close quarters; the columns of infantry and cavalry took to their heels, and a well-directed shell or two completed their confusion. Well did such an army deserve the disgrace which now fell upon it. But we could not have a better illustration of the official corruption in Persia, than the fact that the colonel of one regiment, able to pay a handsome bribe, escaped punishment; and the commander, Prince Khanlar, paid the Sedr Azem £8000, and received from the Shah, on the minister's recommendation, a sword and a robe of honour!* It was the inferior officers and common soldiers who had to be punished for the incapacity of their commanders. Unknown to the com-

* Watson's *History of Persia*, 452.

batants, a treaty of peace had been concluded at Paris on March 4, Farrukh Khan acting for the Persian Government.

The British Government merely insisted that the Shah should withdraw his troops from Afghanistan, and demand no tribute, or "Khotbeh" (praying for him in the mosques), or other mark of subjection, from the chiefs. Such forbearance was the soundest policy, for Persia has been our friend ever since, though at the time of the rebellion in India* she might have done us immense injury. The Prime Minister fully expected that his own dismissal would be demanded; and when the light terms of the treaty were read to him, he uttered a fervent *Aldam dul-illah*—"Praise be to God." He was dismissed his office the following year, when the state of the country could not be concealed from the Shah. In May, 1858, the Turkomans defeated a large Persian force, which had marched to avenge the incursions of those tribes into Khorassan. That the Shah often wished for his late Amir, Teki Khan, is well known. On the dismissal of the Sedr Azem he made the negotiator of the treaty, Farrukh Khan, his Prime Minister, and perhaps he could not have made a better choice. This post he held for eight years, being in 1866 appointed Minister of State in the royal household.

To the great grief of the Shah, his eldest son, Mohammed Khasim Khan, died at Teheran, June 29, 1858, at the early age of twelve years. The present heir-apparent is Muzaffer-ed-Din, born in 1850, and the Shah has one other son, Djalal-ed-Danlah, three years younger.

* The mutiny began by the rebellion of the native regiments at Barrackpore, Burhampore, and Lucknow, January 24 to May 6, 1857. From this fact it will be seen how fortunate it was that the cessation of the Persian war allowed Sir James Outram, Sir H. Havelock, and others, to hurry to India.

In the same year in which the Crown Prince died Sir Henry Rawlinson* was accredited British Minister at the Persian Court. No better appointment could have been made, for Sir Henry was intimately acquainted with Persian affairs, having been resident in the country from 1833 to 1839, and spoke Persian fluently. During that period he did a great deal towards organizing the army according to European models. He resigned his appointment as British Minister in 1859, when the mission was transferred to the Foreign Office. His evidence, given about four years ago before the Committee on the Diplomatic and Consular Services, furnishes us with interesting information respecting his relation with the country. His chief reason for leaving was that the Foreign Office would not allow him to continue the system of giving presents to the Shah, and court officials, and he considered the practice absolutely essential, if a minister wished to retain his influence at court. About £1500 a-year had been previously expended in this manner, and the system is still observed by the Indian Government. In other respects, he did not think that the transfer of the Mission to the Foreign Office had been attended with good results, for he observed that there are few matters which come before a British Minister in Persia involving discussion with European powers, and a young Indian officer would look forward to being attached to the mission as a high prize, whereas an *attaché* from Paris or Vienna would consider it a punishment. Sir Henry thought that

* Sir Henry was born in 1810, and served in the Bombay army from 1827 to 1833. He is a very distinguished Eastern archæologist, and the most learned translator of cuneiform inscriptions. The Rev. G. Rawlinson, author of the *Five Great Monarchies of the Eastern World*, is his brother.

great inconvenience and injury to the public interest arose out of the dual authority respecting the affairs of Persia, for, judging by the tone of the press in India, all proceedings relating to the Persian Gulf are looked upon there with disfavour, as being opposed to the interests of India; but if they were under the Indian authority, this undesirable state of things could not take place. Great delay is caused by the correspondence relating to matters of purely Persian and Indian interest passing through the Foreign Office. Sir H. Rawlinson was extremely popular in Persia. The Shah delighted to chat with him, and, much to the disgust of the Foreign Minister, these audiences frequently took place without his presence.

On September 9, 1858, the Shah decreed a re-organization of the Government, but the men who would really have made such a remodelling permanent were not forthcoming, and things gradually returned to their former state. Great credit is due to the Shah for the partial reforms he did carry out; and by visiting in person every part of his dominions, he sought to remedy the abuses of which such men as Sir Henry Rawlinson must have made him cognizant. A famine and pestilence desolated the land in the winter of 1860. The people surrounded the Shah as he went out to hunt, and shrieked for food. The mayor of Teheran was summoned, and when the king reproached him, he rode out and beat some of the rioters himself. The Shah said, "If thou art thus cruel to my subjects before my eyes, what must be thy secret misdeeds?" The attendants were ordered to bastinado him, and then, carried away by his feelings, the monarch uttered the dreadful

word *Tenab!*—"Strangle him!" At the same time the bastinado was applied to the other magistrates of the city.* Reforms in the army were carried out from 1863 to 1864. It may not be generally known that in 1865 railways† were in process of formation in Persia, but the scheme had to be abandoned. In the following year a most important invention was introduced. This was no other than the electric telegraph. At least, the treaty for its introduction—to connect Europe and India, the East with the West—was signed, and in the succeeding year it was in operation.

The next event of importance was the terrible famine of 1871-72, occasioned by the little snow which fell in 1870, and the want of rain in 1871. No words can describe the sufferings of the people from this scourge. It is estimated that two millions perished, many of whom might have been saved had there been an adequate system of local relief.‡

* Eastwick's *Journal of a Diplomat*, I. 290.

† Seven years after this date they were introduced into Japan.

‡ A letter from Tabrieze, in the *Mshak*, an Armenian paper published at Tiflis, says that great excitement has been produced there by the execution of Mirza Yussuf Khan, one of the ablest and most popular of the statesmen of Persia. Yussuf was educated in Europe at the cost of the Shah, and studied for some time in Paris. On his return he brought with him extracts from French law books, which he translated into Persian and embodied in a code of laws adapted for use in his own country. This code was submitted by the Shah to a committee, but finding that the time was not favourable for reforms, as the famine which has desolated the country for three years had just broken out, he directed Yussuf to go to Astrakhan to purchase provisions for his starving subjects, at the same time supplying him with a considerable sum of money, out of the public treasury, for that purpose. Yussuf went to Astrakhan, but he only spent a portion of the sum intrusted to him in the purchase of provisions, and kept 16,000 tomans for himself, thereby causing the death of thousands of people whom the money might have provided with food. When the Shah returned from his tour in

We advise our readers to peruse Mr. Brittlebank's volume * if they wish to gain an idea of the horrors of that period. This is the scene that presented itself to him at a caravanserai, two days' march to the south of Ispahan: "We found at the entrance a dealer who had some bread and other food for sale. A gun and pistols were within arm's reach of him. With these he protected his treasures, surrounded by the dying and the dead, and looked unmoved on the skeletons who besought him for a crust. It seemed to me that only in a monster could such insensibility to human suffering be found as he exhibited. I bought all that he had to sell, and divided it amongst the crowd of miserable wretches who had followed me. Some devoured it like wild beasts, others could scarcely swallow it. Three were lying on the ground unable to rise. I put bread in their mouths, but they could not eat it. A fourth was lying on his back snoring. This, I afterwards noticed, was a marked symptom in famine cases. When it came, death was close at hand. We tried to rouse him, but in vain, and so carried what remained of the bread to the two men in the khaneh."

We gladly turn to a pleasanter topic—viz., the tour of the Shah. Two thousand three hundred and fifty-three years had elapsed since a Persian monarch visited Europe! We need hardly say we allude to the time when Xerxes—the Ahasuerus of the Book of Esther—invaded Greece at the head of a larger host, if we are to believe historians, than the whole population of modern Persia. There can

Europe, he at once ordered an inquiry into Yussuf's conduct, and, his guilt having been clearly proved, sentenced him to death.—(*Pall Mall Gazette*, December 26, 1873.)

* *Persia during the Famine*, Pickering, 1873.

be little doubt that had not the Sultan of Turkey ventured from his seclusion in 1867, and determined to see Europe for himself, the Shah of Persia would never have left his country. However that may be, he gained the sympathy of all lovers of progress for breaking through that great barrier of dignified retirement—a source in the East both of power and powerlessness.

In order to see how he was likely to be received in Europe, Mirza Melkum Khan, the Nizam-ul-Mulk, was sent to St. Petersburg, in December, 1872, bearing a letter to the Emperor of Russia, stating that the Shah proposed to visit that great empire. A cordial invitation was of course given, and preparations made for the conveyance, by the Caspian and Astrakan route, of the illustrious visitor.

It is not our intention to weary our readers with a recapitulation of the events of this memorable tour.* Suffice

* We quote the following from the *Pall Mall Gazette*, January 2, 1874, and regret that it is not more hopeful:—"The visit of the Shah of Persia last summer to Europe has not yet produced any marked improvement in the administration of the affairs of his country, apparently. The harvest for the year just come to a close has, according to the Teheran correspondent of the *Levant Herald*, been abundant in all parts of Persia, more especially in the important province of Adjerbeidjan. But, on the other hand, brigandage has assumed such proportions, that great difficulty must now arise in suppressing it. Several of the mail couriers have been robbed on the highway, among others the English mail to Ispahan and the Russian courier between Teheran and Resht. It is, moreover, a painful fact that troops sent to quell the evil have in many cases made common cause with the brigands, for the simple reason that the unlucky Persian soldiers have received no pay for the last fifteen months. 'An imposing ceremony' took place the other day at the palace in presence of all the princes and dignitaries of the kingdom. The Shah publicly presented a diadem of great value to his favourite wife (who is understood to have been one of the chief promoters of the intrigue against the ex-Grand Vizier), and at the same time decreed that she should bear the title of Melik Afak, 'the universal Queen.' Whether this lady will now put herself at the head of the great woman movement which threatens to convulse the universe remains to be seen."

it to say the Persian monarch visited the principal countries of Europe, and was everywhere received with enthusiasm.* Before leaving Persia he constituted his second son, Kamran Mirza, Nahib-us-Sultaneh, or vice-regent of the kingdom, and his uncle, Mohammed-a-Doulet, president of the Provincial Government. The telegraph at frequent intervals informed the Persian people of the doings of their Shah, and his reception afforded them the greatest delight. Among his numerous retinue were the Prime Minister, or Grand Vizier, Hadji Mirza Hussein Khan; Prince Ali Kuli Mirza, Minister of Public Instruction, son of Fetteh Ali Shah; Prince Sultan Murad Mirza, Minister of Finance; Prince Firus Mirza, Secretary of War, son of Abbas Mirza, uncle of the Shah; four Satraps (generals), besides chamberlains and other functionaries. Of the satraps, Hussein Ali Khan was ambassador at the court of Napoleon III., and penned for his sovereign an account of the Italian campaign.

In June the Shah astonished Europe by his memorable concession to Baron Reuter. In fact, he requested the baron to take upon him the most important part of the government of the country, to develop its mineral and other resources, construct railways and roads, and in other ways renovate its condition. So that he may not lose in working this great monopoly, the Customs have been handed over to him for twenty-five years—the first five absolutely, the rest on agreeing to pay the Shah sixty per cent. of the net revenue.

Such a concession is unparalleled, and it remains to be

* See Appendix E for description of what the Russians thought of the Shah's reception in this country.

seen whether the baron will be able to work it profitably. A writer in the *Pall Mall Gazette* (June 9, 1873), after comparing the prospects of railway making in Persia and India—pointing out that, though the latter country is immensely wealthy in comparison with the former, the lines there have not paid—observes very reasonably: “Of course it is conceivable that Persia might become, as India became, the theatre of a ‘Persian Company’ like the old East India Company, which might ultimately introduce European ways of thinking and European standards of life; but this is a remote possibility. The truth is, that in all these aggressions of civilization after the European model upon civilization after the Asiatic model, the moral change must precede and cause the physical change, if the physical change is to have much chance of permanent prosperity. If the Shah’s bargain with Baron Reuter is the first fruit of some deep-seated moral revolution which has been going on in Persia like the strange movement which appears to be revolutionizing Japan, the scheme may prosper and take root. But mere mechanical means will never, by themselves, make a nation rich. It is the man, and not the tools, that makes the difference.”

This appears to us to strike at the root of the whole matter. So much depends upon the good faith of the Shah, that Baron Reuter tried to induce our Government to endorse the scheme by its influence. He failed in this attempt, and will have to rely, and probably not in vain, upon the word of the Persian monarch. Mr. Watson, towards the conclusion of his work on the country, written in 1866, has these words: “That His Majesty’s unceasing

efforts have since been directed solely towards securing the well-being of all classes of his subjects, and towards accomplishing the difficult task of providing for the furtherance of justice throughout his wide dominions, it would be unfair to deny. It will be the lot of some future writer to tell the English students of Oriental story that another name has been added to the list of exceptional eastern monarchs." May we not hope, with such a king, for a great future for Persia? * It only remains for us briefly to chronicle the Shah's return to his country. There appears to have been a secret conspiracy between the princes in the suite of the Shah, and some of those who had been left to govern at Teheran. The Grand Vizier had made himself obnoxious to the priestly party by his advocacy of Sufee doctrines. When the Shah, about August 30, arrived at Resht, the princes with him took sanctuary, in which line of conduct they were followed by the conspirators at Teheran, and they refused to return to office until the Grand Vizier was dismissed.† He, of course, resigned, and the Shah, *pro temp.*, accepted his resignation.

On the first stage of the journey, between Resht and Teheran, he sent the princes to Teheran, and ordered them and the conspirators there to return to office. But the Vizier seemed to be so unpopular at Teheran, that the Shah appointed him Governor of Resht. He has since been made Minister of Foreign Affairs. On September 23, His Majesty was met at a distance of four miles from the capital by the foreign legations, and entered Teheran in state. He reprimanded those who

* See Appendix F for anecdotes respecting the Shah.

† *Times*, September 22, 1873.

had taken part in the conspiracy against the Prime Minister. On the following day he gave audience to the diplomatic body, and requested its members to telegraph to their respective governments his thanks for his European reception. On the 25th, what may be called the first practical step in Baron Reuter's scheme was taken,* for on that day the first sod was turned at Resht—the inauguration of the first Persian railway.

* A telegram, dated Teheran, January 8th, 1874, gives the following information respecting the railway which was commenced September 25th. Upwards of eighty miles, or one-third of the line from Resht to Teheran, have been surveyed by Reuter's engineers. The earthworks are now being continued in the direction of Rustamabad. The ballast and sleepers are partly laid. The first consignment of rails has arrived at Baku, on the Caspian Sea. The site of the terminus has been fixed at Enzelli, near Resht. —(*Daily News*, January 9.)

CHAPTER IV.

RELIGION: Zoroaster—Magian Faith under the Sassanian Dynasty—Guebres—Address to the Shah—Results of the Mohammedan Conquest—Doctrines of Mohammed—Shiahs and Sunnies—Ali Shrines—Kerbela—Shrine of the Imam Riza at Meshed.

VERY little is known of the religion of Persia before the time of Zoroaster. Some circumstances would lead to the supposition that the ancient religions of India and that country were similar. Sir John Malcolm* points out that there was, in the early ages of both countries, an abhorrence of animal food, which is still felt by some of the castes of India. It is probable the early Persians worshipped the Deity with simple rites, and without the aid of temples and other accompaniments of religion, which they subsequently adopted.

A great deal of uncertainty exists as to the time when Zoroaster flourished;† judging from the statements of Persian writers, it is probable that he reformed the national religion during the reign of Gushtasp—the

* *History of Persia*. 1815 ed. I. 191.

† Gibbon (*Decline and Fall*, I. 218) advocates the superior antiquity of the philosopher, forming his opinion from the statements of Greek writers. Sir John Malcolm and Dr. Prideaux agree in placing him in the reign of Gushtasp, and this is the period we have adopted. The Persian name of Zoroaster is Zerdosht.

Darius Hystaspes of the Greeks—B.C. 521—485.* Persian historians always delight in the marvellous, and accordingly, when speaking of the birth of Zoroaster, we are told that his mother Daghdā conceived him in a miraculous manner. One high in authority in the district, who had been told of the birth of the wonderful child, determined to destroy him, and many tales are related of escapes from his designs. It was not until the age of forty that Zoroaster found an opportunity to appear at the Court of Darius. His first great convert was the monarch's eldest son, Isfundear, and the king himself was soon convinced by the philosopher's eloquence. The ancient Persians are said to have revered fire as one of the elements. Zoroaster made it the leading feature of his religion, as a symbol of the Deity. We have elsewhere (pp. 12, 13) noticed his doctrines respecting the principles of good and evil, and there was certainly about the whole faith a philosophic simplicity, which was doubtless very attractive. At this stage of fire worship † it is probable that the Persians had no

* For an account of Zoroaster and the difficulties of assigning a correct date, see *Academie des Inscriptions*, tom. xxxvii., or a translation of this in Shea's edition of Mirkhond's *History of Early Kings of Persia*, 274-82 (Oriental Trans. Fund, 1832). Gobineau devotes three chapters of his *Histoire des Perses* (II. 37—70) to this religious reformer and his doctrines. See also Markham's *General Sketch of the History of Persia*, 43—68. For an extract from the latter work, see Appendix G.

† Although "fire worshippers" is a convenient term for the followers of Zoroaster, both his ancient and modern believers strongly protest against it. They say that fire is with them only a symbol of the Deity, and as such they reverence it. They consider that the soul of Zoroaster was created by God, and placed upon the tree from which all that is celestial has been produced. Is not this mystic tree a copy of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden of Eden? Zoroaster received

temples in which to adore it, these being introduced after the death of Zoroaster, which took place before that of Darius. If we take this view of the case, one or two obscure statements of Herodotus are rendered clear.

Darius—this name is more familiar than Gushtasp—threw himself heart and soul into the new religion. He caused 12,000 cowhides to be tanned fine, and had the doctrines of the new faith written upon them, and then the collection was deposited in a rock-hewn chamber at Perseopolis. This is the Zendavesta,* or precepts of the founder, only a small portion of the contents of which is now known.

The change of religion in Persia caused Arjasp, King of Tartary, to write to Darius a letter in which he tried to induce him to return to the old faith, hinting that if he did not do so voluntarily he should be obliged to compel him. Of course an angry reply was returned, and Arjasp invaded the country, but was defeated with great loss. After a few years had expired, Darius sent his son to fight with Arjasp, who was again defeated. Isfundear now rebelled against his father, who imprisoned him, and Arjasp soon after took the opportunity to invade Persia. This time he was more successful, and killed a great number of Zoroaster's followers.

some of the sacred fire from Ormazd, the beneficent spirit, when he is said to have gone to heaven. To establish the truth of his statements, Zoroaster worked miracles, such as holding fire in his hands, allowing boiling metal to be poured upon him, etc. Pliny says he spent twenty years of his life in the deserts in solitary devotion.

* The Zendavesta has been translated by Anquetil du Perron. Ormazd, the good spirit, gave Zoroaster the volume during his mystic journey to heaven. At the same time he visited hell and saw Ahriman, the evil spirit, release a man in whom he perceived some good, and who was therefore unsuited to that place of torment.

The sun was of course adored as a grand symbol of the majesty of the great God, like Him enlightening and revivifying the earth, and the modern fire-worshipper, like his ancient predecessor, turns to that orb when he prays. Respecting other precept scontained in the Zendavesta, it is sufficient to say that they inculcated the purity of the great Creator, and were well designed to inspire in the hearts of the readers high ideas of the Deity. In every place a priest was ordered to read this volume to the people, and expound its precepts.

During his heavenly visit, Zoroaster was ordered not "to soil the earth with carcasses." He therefore commanded one of the most extraordinary burial observances ever observed by any people. In many parts of his creed there is reason to suppose that he, like so many religious teachers, favoured the prejudices of his countrymen, but this custom must have been very repugnant to them. He ordered the corpses to be placed in the top of towers, in such a manner that when the flesh had been eaten by birds, the bones would fall into the interior of the tower. Mr. Mounsey* saw one of these to the north of Rhé, the Rhages of the Apocrypha, and the last halting-place of Alexander the Great in his pursuit of Darius. It was placed on the top of a hill, in accordance with the instructions of Zoroaster. A sort of cage of iron grating contained the body, made in such a manner that the bones could fall through after the flesh had been eaten by birds. A more revolting practice could hardly be imagined.

After the death of the prophet, unanimity of feeling was

* *Journey through Caucasus and Interior of Persia*, 149.

at an end among his followers. As has been the practice with the believers in Christ, little companies separated themselves from the main body, taking a portion of the Zendavesta as their guide, and ignoring the rest of the volume. So that in process of time the number of sects in Persia who acknowledged Zoroaster as their prophet, but differed among themselves in minor matters of faith and worship, was very large. So matters continued until the country passed under the Parthians, the first monarch of which nation, in B.C. 256, commenced the dynasty of the Arsacidæ. From this date until A.D. 226 that dynasty ruled the country, and the Magian * religion was still the faith of the country. But during the rule of the thirty Parthian kings, a number of idolatrous customs corrupted the purity of the ancient Zoroastrian belief. Sylvester de Sacey † tells us that during this period the Magi were held in little respect, and no symbol of their creed appears on any coins then issued, the inscriptions being in Greek.

A re-establishment of the religion of Zoroaster in a purer form took place in A.D. 226, when Artaxerxes (or Ardshir) formed the dynasty of the Sassanides. He gathered together the priests from all parts of his kingdom, and they responded to his call to the number of 80,000.‡ The

* The Magi were priests of the religion of Zoroaster, and had immense power and influence. Like their great predecessor, they were astrologers, and were more than suspected of dabbling in the Black Art. Our word *magic* is derived from their title.

† *Antiquités de la Perse*, 43-5.

‡ A miracle was requisite on this solemn occasion, and accordingly a young priest, Erdaviraph, fell into a trance, and, on awaking, described a journey his soul had taken to heaven and its converse with the Deity.

Zendavesta was translated into the current language of the country, coins appeared with Persian inscriptions and symbols of the worship of fire, and thus the Magian religion became firmly established as the national faith in greater purity. Speaking generally, this state of things continued for four hundred years, when, in 629, the last monarch of the Sassanian dynasty was murdered, or perhaps it is more correct to extend the period to 636, for it was at the battle of Cadesia that it was seen that resistance to the Saracens was useless.

The Mohammedans did not crush the Magian faith without a severe struggle, but they determined to stamp it out effectually. They not only destroyed the temples, but slew the priests, and burnt all the books upon which they could lay their hands, in which were preserved the science, history, and religion of the conquered. It is owing to this latter circumstance that we know so little of ancient Persian history, literature, and science. The followers of Mohammed only saw in these works means to keep up the creed of Zoroaster, and destroyed them accordingly. We have only to glance at Arabian popular tales to show what they thought of fire-worshippers: almost every vile deed there chronicled is assigned to one of these people. But it is right to mention that in a few districts, doubtless from motives of policy, the Guebres were allowed to practise their worship. This was the case at Herat, but in the ninth century a Mohammedan priest incited the people to raze the fire-temple to the ground. This was done amid the shouts of the Mohammedan populace, delighted that the imposing fane would no longer throw into shade their mosque. The Guebres complained to the governor of

Khorassan, but were confounded by a piece of religious perjury much applauded at the time. No less than four thousand Mohammedan citizens of Herat swore that there had never been a fire-temple in the place, and therefore the Guebres could obtain no redress, for what had never existed could not have been destroyed !

Before considering the present position of the Guebres, or fire-worshippers, in Persia, we will briefly notice a few more characteristics of their ancient belief.

When the follower of Zoroaster arrived at years of discretion, he received a sacred girdle which perpetually reminded him that he had put away the frivolities of youth, and, having arrived at man's estate, should hallow with religious observance the actions of his life. Certain prayers and genuflexions were to accompany acts the most trivial, so that a man's religious duties never seemed to be ended. Zoroaster condemned fasting and celibacy, and urgently impressed upon his followers the importance of cultivating the practice of agriculture.* In the spring

* As an interesting addition to what we have written above on the doctrines of the followers of Zoroaster, we append the following remarks by Mr. Mounsey :—"Prayer is one of the duties most strongly enjoined, because man, continually exposed to the assaults of Ahriman, stands in need of the succour which it procures. The Parsee priest prays for himself and all his brethren ; he unites his prayers to those of all the Parsees, of all souls acceptable to Ormazd, which have ever existed, or shall exist, until the resurrection. The whole fabric of their sacred works is built upon three injunctions, termed in the Avesta, *Homuté*, *Hookté*, and *Varusté*, purity of speech, purity of action, and purity of thought. Truth is the basis of all excellence ; virtue alone is happiness in this world ; its path is the path of peace. Good actions are the most acceptable sacrifices to God. Industry is a guard to innocence, and a bar to temptation. Hospitality, philanthropy, and benevolence are strongly inculcated. Untruth is the worst of sins ; wickedness is a garment of shame ; idleness the parent of want. At the resurrection God will judge mankind ; the good will be

of every year, says Gibbon, the kings of Persia set apart a day for the observance of a curious custom. Husbandmen were then invited to partake of the monarch's hospitality, and the king and his nobles vied with each other who could show these humble subjects the greatest attention.

In reading the account of the composition of the Magian priesthood, one is struck with its similarity, in one respect at least, with that of the Order of Jesus in the Church of Rome. Some spent their time in study, and acquired a great reputation for learning, others were to be seen thriving in the atmosphere of courts, but, wherever found, each bent on furthering the interests of the order to which he belonged.

According to an old custom, the gardeners of the British mission at Teheran are always Guebres. Lady Sheil, who often saw and conversed with them, says they are a most industrious race, and struggle hard to maintain themselves. They come chiefly from the eastern province

rewarded in Paradise for their good actions, whilst the wicked will undergo punishment for their misdeeds in a place of torture." Mr. Mounsey also quotes the following from a code of morality drawn up *temp. Ardshir*, A.D. 226, called *Revelation of Ardai Veraf*, the precepts being given him in a vision: "Let not men be taught to set their hearts on the pleasures and vanities of life, as nothing can be carried away with them. In youth and in the prime of manhood, when blessed with health and vigour, you suppose that your strength will never fail—that your riches, your lands, your houses, and your horses will remain for ever. . . . But, O Ardai Veraf! teach them not to think so—teach them the dangers of such a way of thinking. All, all will pass away as a dream. The flowers fade, and give lessons unto man that he is unwilling to profit by. Yes, the world itself will pass away, and nothing remain, but God." (*Journey through Caucasus and Interior of Persia*, 155.) We should mention that the fire-worshipper is called Parsee in India, and Guebre in Persia.

of Yezd, and migrate during the spring, returning before winter. They are allowed to live in the mission garden during their residence at Teheran, and it is not unusual to see two hundred of these people there at one time. In comparison with the Persians, they are very virtuous; but it appears they could not resist Lady Sheil's fat turkeys and vegetables. They only marry one wife, and are very reticent respecting their religious belief. Near Teheran is one of their burial places on a hill, where the bodies are exposed in the repulsive manner we have before described. From having intermarried among their own people only, they preserve their characteristics of feature. They are ill-looking, and somewhat undersized, and are probably more like the ancient Persians than the modern Persian people. The Guebre women are very plain, and do not wear the *chadre*, or veil, worn by all other members of the fair sex in Persia.

At Yedz there are from 7000 to 8000 Guebres. Mr. Mounsey says about 1000 more reside at Kerman, and a few more families at Shiraz, Kashan, and Teheran. The Mohammedans treat them very badly, not allowing them to celebrate the rites of their religion in public, or to have schools of their own. The rich Parsee merchants of Bombay have assisted many to quit the country, but the Persian authorities discourage their departure. The Guebre on his return from a foreign country has to pay a heavy fine, and if he can buy land a tax is imposed of twenty per cent. of its value. When he dies the authorities look out for one of his relations who has turned Mohammedan, and this relation takes the principal part of his property, in this arbitrary manner setting aside the near relations. If a Guebre kills

or wounds a Mohammedan, not only himself but his family are killed; but if the latter kills the former, he would only have to pay eight tomans. Members of this oppressed people are not allowed to ride on horseback; and if a Mohammedan caught a Guebre thus offending he would take his horse, and in so doing would not be transgressing the law. Can we wonder that the 30,000 families known to have been in Persia a century ago are reduced to less than a tenth of that number? It was the remembrance of these oppressions which induced the Parsee inhabitants of Bombay and London to present addresses to the Shah on his recent visit. They received the following reply:—

"Buckingham Palace, July 5, 1873.

"I am commanded by his Majesty the Shah to acknowledge the receipt of your memorials, praying for the application of measures which are calculated to improve the condition of the Zoroastrians in Persia. His Majesty will give this subject his best attention on his return to Persia, and if he finds that your co-religionists are subject to any undue severities, he will take care that redress is afforded them. His Majesty is aware of the high character which is borne by the Parsee community both in England and India, *and he is glad that he numbers among his own subjects so many members of that enterprising and loyal race.* His Majesty is gratified by the expression of your good wishes in regard to him.

"MALCOM.

"To MR. NOWROZJEE FURDOONJEE, 15, Salisbury Street, Strand."

The passage we have italicized reads somewhat remarkably after the statements respecting the unhappy condition of the Guebres, which we have previously made.

In conclusion we may mention that at Sari, in the province of Mazandaran, are remains of the Guebre temples. Mr. Fowler says they are built in the form of a rotunda, about thirty feet high. The same traveller says * that the "everlasting fire," as it is called, still burns at Baku. Dr. Schultz described it to him as being of a pale blue flame, which, when excited by the wind, rises as high as eight or ten feet.

From 636, when the last monarch of the Sassanian dynasty was defeated at the battle of Cadesia, until 1502, at which time Ismail Shah founded the Seffavean dynasty, Mohammedanism was the religion of the country. Before considering, therefore, the present religion of Persia established by Ismail Shah, which is a schismatic form of Mohammed's faith, we will notice the religion of the Prophet in its purer form.

We have already (pp. 31—34) given a sketch of the life of Mohammed, and do not think it necessary to enter into further details here.† The progress of the arms of his followers is unexampled in history. In the seventh and part of the eighth centuries the great wave of Saracenic conquest seemed irresistible; and it appeared probable that the whole civilized world would be obliged to acknowledge the Prophet and his Koran, when Charles

* *Three Years in Persia*, II. 120.

† We advise our readers to peruse the most recent *Apologia* for Mohammed, viz.: "*A Critical Examination of the Life and Teachings of Mohammed*," by Syed Ameer Ali, Moulvi, M.A., L.L.B., of the Inner Temple." London: Williams and Norgate, 1873.

Martel, at the great battle of Tours, in 732, saved Western Europe,—and not Western Europe only, but Christianity, for this decisive battle was a contest between the religion of Christ and the faith of Mohammed, between the Crescent and the Cross, as well as between East and West. Well may Arnold rank it “among those signal deliverances which have affected for centuries the happiness of mankind.” * It is interesting to remember that exactly a century had passed since the death of the great Prophet. “During that century the followers of the Prophet had torn away half the Roman empire; and besides their conquests over Persia, the Saracens had overrun Syria, Egypt, Africa, and Spain, in an unchecked and apparently irresistible career of victory. Nor at the commencement of the eighth century of our era was the Mohammedan world divided against itself as it subsequently became. All these vast regions obeyed the Caliph; throughout them all, from the Pyrenees to the Oxus, the name of Mohammed was invoked in prayer, and the Koran revered as the book of the law.” † About 300,000 Moslems are said to have been slain in the battle of Tours.

There can be no doubt that the change effected by Mohammed in his own country was a salutary one. Disgusted with the idolatry and superstition he saw around him, this wonderful man, after much solitary contemplation, determined the doctrines of his creed. But on discussing the teaching of this or any other religious reformer we are met at the outset with the obvious question, “Was he an impostor?” It appears to us that the

* *History of the Later Roman Commonwealth*, II. 317.

† *Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World*, by Sir E. Creasy, 1869, p. 155.

following remarks of Gibbon * will help us to form a right estimate in this instance: "The energy of a mind incessantly bent on the same object would convert a general obligation into a particular call; the warm suggestions of the understanding or the fancy would be felt as the inspiration of heaven; the labour of thought would expire in rapture and vision; and the inward sensation, the invisible monitor, would be described with the form and attributes of an angel of God. From enthusiasm to imposture the step is perilous and slippery." This was probably the case with Mohammed; at the very least he is entitled to the appellation Reformer in its best sense, as our examination of the tenets of his faith will show.†

The most convenient term to describe his faith is Deism, and he certainly did his best to induce his followers to contemplate the majesty of God. He did not bid them adore natural objects as symbols of the Deity—that fruitful source of idolatrous practices in all ages. "There is but one God," is the foundation of his creed, "and Mohammed is His Prophet." Belief in these two points constitutes "faith," and this faith is to be shown by good "works," as prayer, almsgiving, fasting during Ramazan, and pilgrimage to Mecca.

* *Decline and Fall*, VII. 146. "The Arabians," says Sir John Malcolm (*History*, II. 234), "previous to the appearance of Mohammed were divided at home, and despised abroad; but by adopting his religion they learned to pay exclusive adoration to one true and only God, and obtained a strength from that political union which was the consequence of their common creed, that enabled them to become masters of the fairest portion of the globe."

† Before the time of Mohammed female infanticide was frightfully common all over Arabia. He did his best to stop it by precepts in the Koran.

Mohammed at first imposed on his followers the repetition of fifty prayers daily, but by a subsequent revelation he was ordered to reduce the number to five. It is to be remarked that he taught that every subsequent revelation cancelled a previous one, if the former was antagonistic to it, and in this manner he was able to alter and elaborate his doctrine. The faithful are called to prayer by the muezzin three times a day, the selection of the other two is left to the Mohammedan's judgment. As no image is allowed, the devotee turns towards Mecca, selecting a point in the horizon on which to fix his eyes and keep his thoughts from wandering.* If water is at hand, the face, hands, and back of neck are to be washed; but if not, this "lustration" may be accomplished with sand. Prayer is called the "pillar of faith." The Koran says, "Glorify God when the evening overtaketh you, and when ye rise in the morning: and unto Him be praise in heaven and earth; and at sunset, and when ye rest at noon."† The enthusiasm of Mohammedans for their religion has been generally remarked by travellers. Mr. Fowler describes it as "a sort of soul-absorbing interest superseding all other interests," kept up without the aid of *Koran Societies*. "I have seen," he remarks, "the merchant in the midst of his worldly duties draw the book from his pocket, elevate it to his forehead, then kiss it,

* This point is called *Kibleh*. One of the Shah's titles is *Kiblehi alam*, or "point of the world's adoration."

† Sale's Koran, chap. XXX. Sale (II. 245) says, "Some are of opinion that the five times of prayer are intended in this passage, the evening including the time both of the prayer of sunset and of the evening prayer, properly so called, and the word I have rendered at sunset, making the hour of afternoon prayer, since it may be applied also to the time a little before sunset."

and begin to read aloud or to chant from its inspiring pages, no matter who is present. No false shame is felt at being thus seen engaged with the Prophet: it is the breath of life to him. . . . It were endless to narrate the numerous instances which came before me of Mohammedan zeal. They taught me this humiliating truth, that such is unknown to the followers of the Messiah in my own country, and I could not but reflect that Mohammedan zeal, with Christian faith, would build up such a religion as would adorn his temple, and trample idolatry in the dust—

‘Oh, for a Christian’s faith with Pagan zeal.’

It is astonishing to notice the difference between the cold calculating Protestant, who ekes out his religious duties with Sunday observances merely to pacify his conscience, and the religious feeling intermixed with the customs of the Persians! Their Koran seems to be the only reigning fashion amongst them; it is their spiritual food; they enjoy it, they feed upon it; and so far as I can judge from their external duties of charity and prayer, it is the very animus of their existence.” After this somewhat lengthy quotation, we must pass on to consider the second of the four duties which make up the Mohammedan’s practical religion.

Many Mohammedans bestow a tenth of their goods in charity—some even more—but a fourth of this is all that used to be legally demanded. In the time of the Prophet, this obligatory tax was collected, and employed by Mohammed in the relief of the poor, and also in military expenses. It is not now collected; and though the importance of charity is continually impressed upon the Mohammedan,

its amount is left to his discretion. The Prophet and one or two of his successors depended for their revenue on the above-named tax, and also on the khums, or fifth part of the spoil taken from infidels, by which, as might be expected, a considerable sum was often raised.

It is somewhat remarkable that Mohammed, who frequently expressed his contempt for the asceticism of the monks, should have imposed on his followers the thirty days' fast during the month Ramazan. From sunrise to sunset, on every day of that month, a Moslem must abstain from eating, drinking, smoking, and every kind of pleasure. This Lenten fast of the Moslems was thus instituted by the prophet: "The month of Ramazan shall ye fast, in which the Koran was sent down from heaven, a declaration unto men, etc. God would make this an ease unto you, and would not make it a difficulty unto you, that ye may fulfil the number of days, and glorify God, for that he hath directed you, and ye may give thanks." This abstaining from food all day for a month presses rather hardly upon those who are obliged to work hard. It is said that the abstention from smoking is more generally felt, and it is curious to observe parties of would-be smokers waiting with lighted pipes until the sun shall have disappeared beneath the horizon, when they may indulge in their favourite luxury. At the conclusion of the month's fast all classes make up for their happily-concluded penance by observing a feast called Bairam.

The only remaining practical religious duty is the pilgrimage to Mecca,* which the orthodox believer was

* See Malcolm's *Persia*, II. 230; Binning's *Travels*, I. 372; Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, VII. 93—95; Kitto's *People of Persia*, 143; Sheil's *Glimpses*, 198; and Muir's *Life of Mohammed*, 1858.

ordered to accomplish at least once in his life. Some perform it frequently, and Mohammedan princes undertake the journey in a most sumptuous manner. It is on record that Haroun-al-Raschid* visited the holy shrine nine times, and once spent £700,000 on the way. Mr. Binning tells us that his father Mèhdi built caravanserais at every station between Bagdad and Mecca, spending vast sums. Some devotees lengthen out the pilgrimage by religious observances. Haroun-al-Raschid, on one of his journeys, met Ibrahim Adham—who had, from religious motives, abandoned the throne of Khorassan—returning from Mecca on foot. He had been *twelve years* on the pilgrimage, in consequence of the number of prayers and genuflexions he had vowed to perform.

The Prophet, from policy doubtless, respected the veneration in which the ancient Arabians held the celebrated Black Stone, called the Kaaba. It is deemed, says Sir John Malcolm, one of the precious stones of Paradise that fell to the earth with Adam; being preserved at the Deluge, the angel Gabriel brought it to Abraham when he was building the Kaaba. In order to understand the last statement, it is necessary to observe that the square stone building in which the venerated relic is preserved is, like it, called the Kaaba. The pilgrim also visits the "Palace of Abraham," and there beholds a scarcely less sacred stone, bearing on its face impressions made by the feet of that patriarch. The well of Zemzem, he is told, was formed by the Almighty especially for the refreshment of Hagar. We shall again have occasion to

* We prefer the spelling of the name of our old friend of the Arabian Tales to its more correct form, Haroon-oor-Rasheed, as it is more familiar.

notice the pilgrimage to Mecca, when treating of Persian Mohammedanism.

Although, as we have said, belief in God and His Prophet form the Mohammedan faith, there are certain articles included in that faith which must now claim our attention. Mohammed taught that his followers must believe in certain prophets from Adam, the first, to himself, the last. The number of these is very great—many thousands, indeed—but, we believe, has not been determined by authority. To these prophets God has at various times revealed His will by revelation. Though Jesus is recognized as a prophet, the Bible is not allowed to be read by the Mohammedans, as the volume is considered spurious. It is considered that the true Gospel was carried back into heaven, and therefore does not appear in our Bible. Of course the Koran was the greatest of all revelations from God to man. Twenty-three years elapsed between the communication of its first chapter and its one hundred and fourteenth. Mohammed taught that, in his various visions, the angel Gabriel brought down to the lowest heaven a copy of this work, portions of which were successively dictated to him as occasion required. These the Prophet recorded on palm leaves and even bones, which were cast into a chest and not gathered together until after his decease. When we turn to the Koran itself for information, we find, “there is no God but He, the mighty, the wise. It is He who hath sent down unto thee the book, wherein are some verses clear to be understood; they are the foundation of the book; and others are parabolical. But they whose hearts are perverse will follow that which is parabolical therein, out of low schism, and a desire of the

interpretation thereof; yet none knoweth the interpretation thereof except God.”* We presume that the statements are figurative in the same book in which it is stated in one place that the day of judgment will last a thousand years, in another, fifty thousand years.

At the resurrection, Mohammed is to be raised first for the purpose of interceding for his followers. Good Mohammedans go at once to paradise; sinning members of the same faith for a short time to hell, until they are sufficiently purified for heaven, while everlasting torment in hell is reserved for those who have refused to acknowledge the Prophet. These torments are most vividly described in the Koran, where we are told that every variety of guilt will have a different punishment. Heaven and hell are divided by a bridge, on which will be placed those whose good and evil deeds are the same. Over another bridge everyone must pass, on the day of judgment: the good passing it with ease and safety, the evil falling into the nethermost hell.

The delights reserved for the faithful in Paradise are depicted in glowing colours in the fifty-sixth chapter of the Koran. “They who approach near to God,” says the Prophet, “shall dwell in gardens of delight, reposing on couches adorned with gold and precious stones, sitting opposite to one another thereon. Youths, who shall continue in their bloom for ever, shall go round about to attend them, with goblets and beakers, and a cup of flowing wine; their heads shall not ache by drinking the same, neither shall their reason be disturbed; and with fruits of the sorts which they shall choose, and the flesh of birds of the kind which they shall desire. And

* Sale's *Koran*, chap. iii. p. 53.

there shall accompany them fair damsels, having large black eyes, resembling pearls hidden in their shells, as a reward for that which they shall have wrought. They shall not hear therein any vain discourse, or any charge of sin; but only the salutation, Peace, peace!"* One cup of a delicious fountain at the entrance allays thirst for ever, and a "tree of happiness" is divided into branches, one of which comes to the habitation of all there. The obscurest believer will have seventy-two houris in attendance upon him, and all fare sumptuously, and live in tents studded with precious stones. But Sir John Malcolm points out† that the delights of this sensual paradise were copied by Mohammed from other religious systems. For example, the region and garden of the Jewish mansion of the blessed, the Majian houris, the Hindu Tarucalpa, or tree of desire, and the metaphorical description of the Christian heaven, supplied him not only with leading ideas, but minute details.

"The fate of every man have we bound about his neck," says the Koran, and predestination colours Mohammedan life, civil as well as religious. It leads both Persians and Turks to be calm and philosophic, under adverse fortune, which they call fate. Mr. Fowler points out the extraordinary fact that the Turks firmly believe that they will be driven out of Europe, and this traditional belief causes Moslems to order their bones to be interred on the Asiatic side of Constantinople, that they may not be disturbed by the invaders.‡

* Sale's *Koran*, chap. ii. p. 401.

† *History of Persia*, II. 226.

‡ The same author says that in the South of Persia it is a common inquiry amongst the inhabitants, "When are the English coming to take possession of Persia?" (*Three Years in Persia*, vol. II., Appendix.)

Friday is the Mohammedan Sabbath, and its observance is thus enjoined in the Koran: "O true believers, when ye are called to prayer on the day of the assembly, hasten to the commemoration of God, and leave merchandizing. This will be better for you if ye knew it. And when prayer is ended, then disperse yourselves through the land as ye list, and seek gain of the liberality of God." The priest attached to every mosque should attend three times every day for the purpose of encouraging by his presence the devotions of the people.* He is also supposed to preach daily, but this practice is not universally observed. On Friday he is obliged to do so, taking for his text, of course, a verse from the Koran, and the day is generally further distinguished by the performance of a special service called *Khouteb*.

We cannot better conclude our notice of Mohammedanism than by quoting the following eloquent words of Gibbon† on the system of the prophet: "His beneficial or pernicious influence on the public happiness is the last consideration in the character of Mohammed. The most bitter or most bigoted of his Christian or Jewish foes will surely allow that he assumed a false commission to inculcate a salutary doctrine, less perfect only than their own. He piously supposed, as the basis of his religion, the truth and sanctity of their prior revelations, the virtues and miracles of their founders. The idols of Arabia were

* The day is better observed in Turkey than in Persia. The Sultan as the successor of Mohammed regularly attends the mosque with considerable pomp, but the Shah does not thus set a good example to his people. Both in structure and embellishments the Persian mosques are far inferior to those of Turkey.

† *Decline and Fall*, VII. 168.

broken before the throne of God, the blood of human victims was expiated by prayer, and fasting, and alms, the laudable or innocent arts of devotion, and the rewards and punishments of a future life were painted by the images most congenial to an ignorant and carnal generation. Mohammed was perhaps incapable of dictating a moral and political system for the use of his countrymen; but he breathed among the faithful a spirit of charity and friendship, recommended the practice of the social virtues, and checked by his laws and precepts the thirst for revenge, and the oppression of widows and orphans. The hostile tribes were united in faith and obedience, and the valour which had been idly spent in domestic quarrels was vigorously directed against a foreign enemy." Sir John Malcolm* writes of the Prophet and his doctrines in a similar commendatory manner.

Having mentioned the principal tenets of Mohammedanism believed in alike by Sunnies and Shiahs,—the Turkish and Persian followers of the Prophet,—we now turn to the doctrines which form the sources of division between those great sections of the Mohammedan faith. The Shiah belief has been the religion of Persia since the accession to the throne, in 1502, of Ismail Shah,† first monarch of the Seffavean dynasty. As we have

* *History of Persia*, II. 235.

† He claimed to be descended from Mussah Kazim, the seventh descendant of their beloved Ali. There are twelve of these descendants who are called imams, imaums, or high priests. These are Ali, Hassan, Hussein, and the nine descendants of the latter. The fourth imaum was Zein-ul-Abidin, Hussein's son. The twelfth imaum, Mehdi, disappeared mysteriously at the age of twelve years, and he was the last descendant of Ali. The Persians think that he is still living, and is in possession of Ali's perfect Koran, and will appear as their Messiah.

remarked in our notice of the reign of that king, the great collection of traditions termed the Soona, which orthodox Mohammedans consider as binding, was compiled in order to remedy the want of legal details in its great predecessor, the Koran. The chief portion of this volume the Shiahhs reject, and they also accuse the Sunnies of using a mutilated Koran, and state that Ali had the only perfect copy of that book, which was in forty sections instead of thirty, now used by their religious opponents.

But the chief point of difference between the two rival sections of Mohammedans is the *vexata questio* of the legitimate descendants of the great prophet. The Sunnies acknowledge Abubekr—which name means “father of the girl,” as he was father of Ayeshab, one of Mohammed’s favourite wives—Omar, and Othman as his favourite successors. The Shiahhs reject all these as usurpers, and consider that Ali—who married Fatimah the Prophet’s daughter, and being the son of the younger brother of Mohammed’s father, was his cousin—was the rightful heir.

Ali, at the expiration of twenty-six years—for Abubekr, Omar, and Othman ruled respectively for two, twelve, and twelve years—gained the sovereignty, but his reign was harassed by the machinations of Ayesha, and the powerful party who had always been opposed to him. He would have been elected on the decease of Omar, if he had not refused to be bound by the traditions and interpretations of Abubekr and Omar. He considered that many erroneous doctrines had been promulgated by them in the name of the Prophet, and we see in his opposition to their conduct the rise of a portion of the Shiah belief. Much as Ali had desired the throne at the death of Mohammed,

and on the demise of his two immediate successors, it is said that when Othman deceased, he only yielded reluctantly to the wishes of his friends. After a troubled reign, he was assassinated in 660 in the mosque of Kufa. It would have been difficult to find a man less fitted to succeed him at such a crisis than his eldest son, Hassan. His incapacity was sufficiently manifested after six months' reign, and he gave place to Moaviyah, the great enemy of his father. He was of the noble house of Ommeyya, and had been Mohammed's secretary. It is believed that Hassan was afterwards poisoned.

Ali had another son, Hussein, a prince of a firmer temperament, who, on the death of Moaviyah, and the accession of his son Yezid, escaped to Mecca. Misled by the representation of the people of Kufa—who said they would support him if he attempted to seize the Caliphate,—he set out for that city with less than 100 men. At least 5000 were opposed to him on the plains of Kerbelah, where the massacre—for it could hardly be called a battle—took place.* The corpse of Hussein was subjected to many indignities, but Yezid is said to have exclaimed when he saw his head, “O Hussein, had it been in my power to save thee, thy life had not been lost!” This took place B.C. 680.

The remembrance of the unhappy circumstances attending the deaths of Ali and his two sons form the most popular portion of the Persian religion. As the Persians venerate these three imams, they execrate the memory of the three successors of the Prophet, who in their

* Ali's other descendants resided principally at Medina ; and though they were often engaged in conspiracies to get that power which they believed their right inheritance, they could not succeed.

opinion supplanted Ali. In the South of Persia, Mr. Fowler tells us,* in the month corresponding to our June they have a festival instituted on purpose to execrate Omar, the one of the three they appear to dislike most. A rude figure of that Caliph is placed on a platform, which the spectators begin to revile. When they have worked themselves up sufficiently they throw stones at the image, and eventually destroy it. The mob then scramble for the sweetmeats with which the figure is filled. Chardin remarked that when the Persians discharged their bows they often exclaimed, "May this arrow go to the heart of Omar."† On the other hand, they venerate Ali and his sons, and lavish upon them the greater portion of their religious enthusiasm.

What we may call the Ali shrines, or places of pilgrimage, are all in the country round Bagdad. That of Ali himself is at Nujuff, near Kufa, the latter place being, it will be remembered, his chief city. Early in this century the Pasha of Bagdad, fearing the Arabs, took away the treasures of this shrine; but when the danger was past he did not return them. But the shrine of Hussein at Kerbela is perhaps more generally popular. This is near the ruins of Babylon, and the place, from the number of pilgrims who resort there, does not exhibit the decay observable in Persian cities. A magnificent mosque has been erected over the tomb, richly decorated with enamelled tiles, and surmounted by a gilded dome and arabesque-ornamented minarets. By payment of an enormous sum, a wealthy Persian can be buried in the

* *Three Years in Persia*, II. 130.

† *Voyages de Chardin*, II. 243.

interior of the mosque near the tomb of the venerated imam, but less favoured individuals are content with a resting-place in an outer court, and even for the latter privilege considerable sums are paid.

Those whose friends cannot afford any payment are brought into the mosque, laid for a short time on the tomb of Hussein, and then buried in some neighbouring cemetery. When we mention that the Persians consider that according to the position of the burial-place in relation to Hussein's tomb so will be their place near him in Paradise, we shall get some idea of the importance attached to the mode of sepulture. From all parts of Persia bodies are brought, sometimes in an advanced state of decomposition, to Kerbela, and it has always been a source of regret to the Persians that such a shrine is not in their own country, as they are compelled to pay certain fees to the Turkish Government before the corpse can enter the holy city. In 1801 the Wahabees carried off a large amount of treasure from this mosque. This sect was founded by Abdul-Wahaub, early in the last century. His avowed object was to restore the purity of the Moslem faith, and his followers became a powerful body, but were put down by the Sultan about 1818. In 1839 an Indian prince gave a rich canopy decorated with emeralds, and having pillars of gold studded with diamonds, valued at more than £21,000, to be placed over Hussein's tomb.

At Kathem, near Bagdad, is the mausoleum of Mussah Kazim, the seventh imam and ancestor of Shah Ismail. It is recorded that Haroun-al-Raschid imprisoned him, and he died in captivity. This is the third "Ali" place of pilgrimage, and the fourth is a cavern near the same city

from which Mehdi, the twelfth and last imam, is said to have disappeared.

One at least of these shrines—that of Kerbela—is more popular with the Persians than the celebrated pilgrimage to Mecca. Of course wealthy Persians go to the latter place, and often spend a considerable amount of time and money on the journey; but its great distance, as well as being in the hands of their religious opponents, prevents its being generally resorted to. The Koran, however, says “Verily the first house appointed to me to worship was that which is in Mecca, blessed, and a direction to all countries. Therein are manifest signs of the place where Abraham stood; and whoever entereth therein shall be safe; and it is a duty towards God, incumbent on those who are able to go thither, to visit this house.” It is allowable for those who are unable to make the pilgrimage to get a substitute, and as in Europe in the Middle Ages there are men whose only occupation it is to make the journey for others. Those who have themselves made the pilgrimage afterwards bear the title of *hadji*, and then assume the turban.

Shah Abbas the Great (1582—1627), wishing to prevent so much wealth passing out of Persia by means of this pilgrimage to Mecca, and also to other distant shrines, established that of the Imam Riza,* at Meshed, and Persians who have been there are henceforth called *meshedis*. Corpses are conveyed to this place in the same way as they are to Kerbela. Another great pilgrimage in Persia is to the mosque of Koom, containing the tomb

*He was the eighth imam, and was poisoned by the son of Haroun-al-Raschid.

of Fatimah, daughter of the Imam Riza. A railing of gold and silver protects the sepulchre of the Holy Virgin of Koom, * and the edifice is also celebrated as having been for centuries the burial-place of the kings of Persia.

* Grant Watson's *History of Persia*, chap. ix.

CHAPTER V.

RELIGION : Festival in Honour of Ali—Dramatic Representation of the Deaths of Hassan and Hussein—Sufee Doctrines—Dervishes—Bâbis—Attempt on the Life of the Shah—Jews—Introduction of Christianity—Nestorians—Armenians—Translation of the Scriptures—Missionaries in Persia—Henry Martyn—His Tomb—Martyn's Translation of the New Testament—Dr. Wolff—Revs. Robt. Bruce and Gordon—Horrors of Famine.

On the 19th, 20th, and 21st of the fasting month (Ramazan) the Persians hold a festival in honour of Ali, on which occasion the record of his death is read in public. But this produces little effect upon the people compared with the commemoration, on the first ten days of the month Mohurrem, of the death of his sons Hassan and Hussein. In one or more of the maidans, or squares, of a Persian town, a stage is erected with an awning over it. On this their deaths, but chiefly that of Hussein, are represented. Dr. Kitto * says that in this play a good feeling is produced towards the English by the representation of an Englishman interceding with Yezid on behalf of Hussein. He explains that the ambassador was supposed to be English, merely because the English are the Europeans from distant parts, with whom they are best acquainted. He was probably an envoy from the

* *People of Persia*, 160.

Greek emperor. When the audience has been worked up into passionate grief, it is not unusual for men to rush through the streets cutting themselves with knives, and crying "Hassan! Hussein!"

The dramatic representation is similar to those Miracle or Passion plays so popular with us during the mediæval period, and which still survive in some obscure villages abroad.* It is interesting to note the effect the Persian play† has had upon travellers. Mr. Morier observes, "In the very tragical parts most of the audience appeared to weep very unaffectedly: and as I sat down near the Grand Vizier and his neighbour the priest, I was witness to many real tears that fell from them. In some of these mournful assemblies it is the custom for a priest to go about with a piece of cotton in his hand, with which he carefully collects the falling tears, and then squeezes it into a bottle, preserving them with the greatest caution. . . . Some Persians believe that in the agony of death, when all medicines have failed, a drop of the tears so collected put into the mouth of a dying man will revive him."

In the best towns the acting takes place in large canvas tents called *tekkyehs*: Mr. Mounsey says that the Shah and most of his grandees have their own private *tekkyehs*, but he saw two out of the ten acts of the great drama—each act lasts a day—in a *bourgeois* *tekkyeh* which was arranged something like a theatre. He observes—"Each of the performers in it (the first act) had his part written on a bit of

* The most celebrated of this is of course Ober Ammergau, in Bavaria.

† A great deal of interesting information respecting the Persian plays will be found in M. de Gobineau's *Les Religions et Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale*.

paper in his hand so as to refresh his memory whenever it failed him, and was conducted to his proper place and put in position by the prompter, who never quitted the stage, and gave us frequent explanations of what appeared to him ambiguous in the acting or declamation. From the beginning to the end of the piece the audience kept up continuous wailing and weeping, which became louder and more vehement at the touching moments. The intercession of the foreigners, for instance, was received with a great burst of lamentation, and at one moment I thought that my host, who sat beside me, would choke himself with sobbing." Towards the end of the second act "the whole audience went into convulsions of the most passionate grief,—a perfect frenzy, in fact; for the women tore their veils and hair, and the men rent their garments, and beat their bared breasts until the blood flowed." *

It is somewhat remarkable that the Sunnies should hold Christians in greater esteem than the Shiahhs do. But so it is. The Persians class Christians and pagans in the same category as utterly unclean. The great portion of the people would not for one moment eat with a European, and a beggar will often wash a coin given him by an "infidel," so that he may not be polluted. In their exaggeration of devotion to Ali, some Persians consider him as Divine. Lady Sheil says† that the votaries of this form of Shiahism are chiefly confined to the genuine Persian tribes of Lek descent, as distinguished from the Kurds. She says that though this opinion is known to exist among the Leks to a large extent, no attempt is made

* *Journey through Caucasus and Persia*, 314, 315.

† *Glimpses*, p. 199.

to suppress it. Many believe that Christ and Ali are the same person, and some go further, and deify Hussein, Ali's son.

The Shiahs do not look upon the Shah as the head of their religion in the same sense as the Sunnies. The latter venerate the Sultan, as hereditary Caliph, being descended from Motavakhel Billah II., the last of the Abbassides.* Of other Shiah festivals we should mention the Ede-y-Kourban, in which they celebrate Abraham's proposed sacrifice of his son. A camel and great quantities of cattle are slain on this occasion. When the Shiahs prostrate themselves in prayer they place upon the ground a small piece of clay, called *moohr*, and touch it with the forehead at every prostration. This disc is generally made of earth brought from Kerbela. The Sunnies use for the same purpose a small bag containing earth from Mecca.

The doctrine of the Sufees† first gained an importance in Persia when Ismail Shah (who, though he established the Shiah religion, was known to favour Sufeeism) ascended the throne. As the educated classes in Persia are greatly imbued with this belief at the present time—even the Shah is supposed to favour it‡—we must devote some space to its consideration.

* The Sunnies are far more numerous than the Shiahs, and include, besides the Turks, the Arabs of Syria and Egypt, the Affghans, &c. The Shiahs comprise, besides the Persians, the Usbek tribes of Tartary, and the Mussulmans of India.

† The term has been derived from *saaf*, pure, and also *suf*, or *soof*, wool, the latter being given because of the species of garments worn by converts to the faith. Dr. Kitto thinks it not unlikely that the name came originally from the Greek *Σοφοί*, "wise man."

‡ Ussher (*Journey from London to Perseopolis*, 629) says this opinion is strengthened by the fact, that no opportunity is lost of lessening the power of the moollahs, the great enemies of the Sufees.

The term as now applied to the belief of many Persians includes numerous varieties of unbelief. In fact, a considerable number have adopted the creed as an excuse for expressing contempt for the established religion. But its former, and, indeed, many present, adherents, had a definite and, in some respects, noble faith. They consider that God pervades everything, and that men are also partakers of the Divine essence. The Sufee has no objection to be intimate with the Christian, for he believes that all men, being of God, are pure, and cannot, therefore, be unclean. This is the bright side of the system, but they do not believe in the existence of good and evil, nor in future states of reward and punishment, but consider that the bodies of men will be simply re-absorbed into the Divine essence.

Antagonistic as are the tenets of Sufeeism and Moham-medanism, there are some enthusiastic followers of the Prophet who, nevertheless, attempt to include in their faith some of the doctrines of the former creed. The strict Sufees, of course, reject the Koran as a revelation from God. "The Sufees," says Kanzee Noorolla, of Shuster, in the *Mojalis-ul-Mominin*, a treatise on the Shiah faith, "are of two classes. Those who desire human knowledge, and pursue it in the accustomed way, observing the common ordinances of religion, are called Moota-Kullum (advocates or observers), those who practise austerities, and strive to purify their souls, are called Sufees. . . . The Almighty, after His prophets and holy teachers, esteems none more than the pure Sufees, because their desire is to raise themselves through His grace from their earthly mansion to the heavenly region, and to

exchange their lowly condition for that of the angels." Sir John Malcolm * observes that the term seems to include all, "from the saint, who raves about divine love, to the sinner, who scoffs at the rites of the worship of his country." Those who wish to see the number of sects, or gradations of belief, held by the Sufees, should consult the same author's *History of Persia* (II. 271—78). There can be no doubt that Persian Sufeeism is only another form of the religious philosophy so popular with an influential body among the Hindus. Though many who are called Sufees in Persia only follow a mild form of it, there are others, the strict Sufees of the above extract, who spend their whole lives in mortifications, a fitting probationship, they consider, for re-absorption into the Divinity.

What may be called the Mohammedan Sufees claim the Prophet as one of their number (!), and think that all the imams taught this belief. In order probably to delude the Shiah Mohammedans, many of the Sufees pretend to a great reverence for Ali. Some of the chief Persian poets are claimed as Sufees, as Hafiz, Jami, and others; and the *Musnavi* of Jelaz-ed-din—called the learned doctor—their chief religious work, is a poem. This work teaches that all nature—showing its origin—cries out in the exuberance of divine love. This quotation will suffice to indicate the character of the poem:—

"Hear how yon reed, in sadly pleasing tales,
 Departed bliss and present woe bewails!
 With me from native banks untimely torn,
 Love-warbling youths, and soft-eyed virgins mourn.
 O! let the heart by fatal absence rent
 Feel what I sing, and bleed when I lament.

* *Sketches of Persia*, I. 106.

Who roams in exile from his parent bow'r,
Pants to return, and chides each ling'ring hour.
My notes, in circles of the grave and gay,
Have hail'd the rising, cheer'd the closing day :
Each in my fond affections claim'd a part,
But none discern the secret of my heart.
What though my strains and sorrows slow combin'd !
Yet ears are slow, and carnal eyes are blind.
Free through each moral form the spirits roll ;
But sighs avail not. Can we see the soul ? " *

The first royal persecutor of the Sufees was Shah Hussein, the last monarch of the Seffavean dynasty. But in the reign of the Kureem Khan (1753—79) a Sufee teacher, Meer Massoom, came from India, and openly taught the faith at Shiraz. Influenced by the moollahs, the king banished him ; but persecution had its usual effect in increasing the number of converts. Ali Moorad Khan (1781—85) also persecuted the Sufees. Fetteh Ali (1797—1834) wrote to Aga Mohammed Ali, the high priest of Kermanshan : " Whereas the Sufees have extended their belief to an alarming extent, and obtained many foolish and credulous converts, who adopt their faith and dress in their fashion ; whereas all this is contrary to the interests of the true religion, and has occasioned much thought to the wisest of our State ; whereas you also have urged us much on the subject, we have taken the ill into consideration, and have written to all our governors and officers to punish these offenders, if they do not recant, to take from them all they plundered from weak men, and, if the proprietors cannot be found, to distribute it among the poor. We have, in short, ordered that the sect may be extirpated, and put an end to, in order that the true faith may flourish.

* Sir W. Jones' Works, I. 458.

Aga Mehdi and Meerza Mehdi have been deceiving the people about Hamadan, who consider them as holy teachers. They were sent prisoners to our presence; we send them by Achraff Khan Yessawul to be delivered over to you, whom we regard as the wisest, the most learned, and most virtuous outamah of our kingdom." *

The greater portion of the dervishes of Persia are so far Sufees that they do not use the Mohammedan form of prayer, and some other observances of that religion. These dervishes are of two kinds: those who live in the town with their families, and those who wander about the country. The former class is the best off. Mr. Watson † says there are hundreds of these in the towns of Persia. At Teheran many of them reside in good houses, and live on the fat of the land. It is a usual thing with a dervish, if his request for alms is not immediately granted, to sit down before a house, and threaten to curse the inhabitants. So much is this dreaded, that he is generally relieved.

The Bābis next claim our attention, and our remarks on this sect will be brief, as we have already ‡ described their rise, present condition, and tenets at some length. They first appear on the page of history during the reign of Mohammed Shah (1834—48), and have at various times given considerable trouble to the Government. The Bāb creed may be described as Sufeeism and Mormonism combined. It resembles the former creed in its doctrines respecting natural objects being a portion of the Deity, and the latter in its advocacy of a plurality of wives and the

* From a MS. in the possession of Sir J. Malcolm.

† *History of Persia*, chap. I.

‡ Pp. 99, 100, 104—106.

possession of goods in common.* The Shiahhs, as we have before remarked, hold that the Koran lacks ten sections; the Bāb pretended to discover these; but whereas the rest of that volume is remarkable for the purity of its Arabic, his portion is in the poorest style of that language.† When the Bābis attempted the life of the present Shah, the following description of their crime was inserted in the official *Teheran Gazette* :—

“Some profligate unprincipled individuals, destitute of religion, because disciples of the accursed Seyed Ali Mohammed Bāb, who some years ago invented a new religion, and who afterwards met his doom. They were unable to prove their faith, the falsehood of which was visible. For instance, many of their books having fallen into our hands, they were found to contain nothing but pure infidelity. In worldly argument, too, they never were able to support their religion, which seemed fit only for entering into a contest with the Almighty. They then began to think of aspiring to sovereignty, and to endeavour to raise insurrections, hoping to profit by the confusion and to pillage the property of their neighbours. A wretched, miserable gang—whose chief, Moolla Sheikh Ali, of Turoheez, styled himself the deputy of the former Bāb, and who gave himself the title of High Majesty—collected round themselves some of the former companions of Bāb. They seduced to their principles some dissolute debauchees, one of whom was Haji Suleiman Khan, son of the late Yaheya Khan, of Tabreez. In the house of this Haji it was

* In the time of Nushirvan I. (or Chosroes) a fanatic named Mazdak promulgated a like creed.

† For an interesting account of the doctrines of the Bāb, see M. de Gobineau's work, *Les Religions et Philosophies de l'Asie Centrale*.

their practice to assemble for consultation, and to plan an attempt on the auspicious life of his Majesty. Twelve of their number, who were volunteers for the deed, were selected to execute their purpose, and to each of them were given pistols, daggers, etc. It was resolved that the above number should proceed to the Shah's residence at Necaveran, and await their opportunity."*

The Jews in Persia are few in number, and very badly treated. At Barfouroush, in the province of Mazanderan, in 1866, the populace rose one night and attacked the Jews in the town, killing twenty-six men and women. Mr. Mounsey suggests that this arose from the failure of a custom observed there. It is this. When rain is required a Jew's body is disinterred, and the dust scattered to the four winds; and the non-appearance of the desired rain after the ceremony is supposed to have exasperated the inhabitants. At the instigation of the British minister an inquiry took place; but the Shah feared to do much, as the massacre was not unapproved by the moollahs. £16,000 was ordered to be paid to the Jews, who suffered severely by being driven out of their houses, of which sum they got about a fourth. At the recent visit of the Shah, Sir Moses Montefiore, whose efforts for his oppressed brethren in all parts of the world are unremitting, sent an address to him on behalf of the Jews in Persia. The reply stated that "His Majesty has always manifested solicitude for the welfare of his subjects, without distinction of class or creed, and he will take care that no injustice or undue severity is shown to the Jewish community, whom you rightly characterise as loyal, peaceable, and industrious citizens."

* Lady Sheil's *Glimpses*, 278, 279.

The Jews prosper as well in Turkey as they do badly in Persia.

It is not our intention to go into the question whether Christianity was introduced into Persia by SS. Thomas and Jude. That the banner of the Cross had been raised there at an early period is proved by the persecution of Persian Christians by Sapor at the end of the third century. Narses also, his successor, prohibited that religion in the country. We must pass on towards the middle of the fifth century, to 440, when Barsumas, Bishop of Nisibis, promulgated the doctrines of Nestorius in Persia.* The Nestorians now number about half of the Christians in the country, and are estimated by Major-General Lake at twenty-five thousand.† Sir John Malcolm, in 1810, found at Sannah a colony of forty Nestorian families, who had a pastor and a small church. He says they appeared to live in great comfort, were peaceable and industrious, and enjoyed the protection of the princes of Ardelan.‡ The chief portion of this Church now in Persia resides in and around Oroomia, about sixty-four miles from Tabreez. This position subjects them to considerable persecution from border chieftains and their people.

Colonel Sheil, in 1835, resided at Oroomia, and has

* Nestorius was born in Syria, and so distinguished himself as a priest, that Theodosius made him, in 428, Archbishop of Constantinople, which important post he held until 431, when he was censured for saying that the Virgin Mary was not the Mother of God. Having been condemned by the Council of Ephesus in the last-mentioned year, he went to Arabia, and subsequently (in 450) died in Egypt, not, however, before he had gained many converts to his doctrines.

† "Persia and her Kings," *Sunday at Home*, August, 1873.

‡ *History of Persia*, II. 300.

given a very interesting description * of the Nestorian Christians. A Nestorian khaleefa, or bishop, who had come from the mountains of Kurdistan to take charge of this bishopric, told him that his people disavowed Nestorius, and that Kaldanee was the name of his nation and language, the latter resembling Syriac. Colonel Sheil says it is extremely difficult to ascertain the doctrines and observances of the Nestorians, who, from their desire to please their interrogators, express belief in matters of faith which they think will be agreeable to them. Hence the great discrepancies in the accounts given by various missionaries. They appear to differ in many points from orthodox Catholics, and consider that the Spirit proceeds from the Father only; do not practise confession; have no pictures or images in their churches; take the communion in both kinds; and deny purgatory. Two Americans, Dr. Grant and Dr. Perkins, founded a most flourishing mission at Oroomia. They simply established a school for the education of the Nestorian youth, but had frequent opportunities, which could not be resisted, of conversion. Dr. Grant thought, from their language and retention of much of the Mosaic ceremonial, that the Nestorians or Kaldanees were "a remnant of Israel, a relic of the ten tribes carried into captivity by Shalmanezzer, the King of Assyria." In many other respects they resemble the Jews.

There were a few orthodox Catholics residing near Oroomia when the American mission was established, and the Papal Court, dreading their conversion, sent Pères Chizel and Darnis to preserve them from contamination.

* See his Appendix to Lady Sheil's *Glimpses of Life in Persia*, 1856, p. 348.

They have not been able to effect much in consequence of their poverty.

Roughly speaking the other half of Christians in Persia are Armenians. They are most numerous in the Feridun district, but have also a colony in a suburb of Ispahan and Hamadan, the ancient Ecbatana.* As a general rule throughout Persia, Christians are not allowed to be insulted by the Mohammedans. Abbas Mirza, the son and heir apparent of Fetteh Ali, set an admirable example in this respect. In 1807† one of his household insulted an Armenian merchant at Tabreez, ridiculing his religion, and otherwise misconducting himself. The merchant beat him severely, and when the servant complained to his master, the prince told him he would hear both sides of the case. He was convinced that his servant was in the wrong, and ordered him to be bastinadoed. In order to have the law on his side, Abbas Mirza consulted the interpreters of the Mohammedan law (founded, of course, on the Koran), and they admitted that Jesus was a real prophet, that the laws contained in the Bible are just, and therefore it was not permitted to blaspheme him or his Gospel.

Mr. Fowler ‡ observes of the Crown Prince—whose untimely death in 1833 caused so much sorrow,—“It was remarkable that the prince, who had never been beyond his own country, and was brought up to the most rigid tenets of his faith, should have been so liberal a Mohammedan. He had no idea of converting people to the Prophet’s creed; on

* There is a considerable settlement at Erivan, once Persian, now Russian territory.

† Kitto’s *People of Persia*, 106.

‡ *Three Years in Persia*, I. 323.

the contrary, he had the most contemptuous opinions of those who, from interested motives, would embrace Islamism. One parade day the moollahs came forward, congratulating the prince on their having converted an infidel to the true faith. He inquired what were the man's motives; was he acquainted with the doctrines which Mohammed taught, and did he adopt them from conviction? On being answered that he knew nothing of the Koran, the prince immediately said, "Then he must have had some interested motive in doing so;" which he heartily despised, and ordered his pay to be reduced twenty tomans; he being then in the military service. As might have been expected, the renegade returned again to his former belief.

In 1815 Teheran suffered from a severe drought. One of the chief priests induced the populace to consider that it was a judgment of Heaven for their leniency towards the Armenians there. The people destroyed the churches of that body of Christians, and also their wine stores, for the moollahs, as strict Mohammedans, could not be expected to look favourably upon those who induced their people to break the commands of the Prophet. The Shah (Fetteh Ali, 1797—1834) when he heard of the proceedings, summoned the rioters and ordered them to pay 1000 tomans (£500) to the Christians, himself giving 3000 tomans, and rebuilding their church.* Two Armenians had a considerable share in the translation of the Scriptures which, by order of Nadir Shah, was commenced when he returned from a victorious expedition into India, in 1740.

* Though the Persians conquered Armenia in the middle of the fourth century, they were not able to introduce the Magian religion. After the Council of Chalcedon (451) the Armenian bishops separated from the orthodox church.

The monarch appears to have been seized with a desire to know more about the Gospel of the Christians than he could learn from those around him. Besides the Armenians, some Jews and orthodox Catholics were employed, and a learned moollah assisted them, so that they might use only the correct Persian words.

The translators, as might have been expected, had frequent disputes; but one of the (Roman) Catholics says, "We had the consolation of seeing that in all these contestations the Mohammedan, guided by the light of reason alone, decided in favour of the Catholic explications, which to him appeared perfectly conformable to the natural sense of the text." Jonas Hanway* thus alludes to the result of this matter. "It seemed, however, from the manner in which he (the king) conducted this business, to be more the effect of caprice than of any steady and consistent plan. . . . Among the Christians summoned on this occasion, only one Romish priest, born in Persia, was a sufficient master of the language to enter upon a work of so critical a nature. As to the Armenians, though they are born subjects to Persia, and intermixed with the inhabitants, yet there are few of them who understand the language fundamentally. It was natural to expect that Mirza Mehtic and the Persian mollahs would be more solicitous how to please Nadir, and to support the credit of Mohammedanism, than to divest themselves of prejudices and become masters of so important a subject. This translation was dressed up with all the glosses which the fables and perplexities of the Koran could warrant; their chief guide was an ancient Arabic and Persian translation."

* *Historical Account of the British Trade over the Caspian Sea*, IV. 217.

After six months' labour the translators had finished as much as they thought sufficient to give the king an idea of the whole work, and accordingly showed it to him. He is said to have remarked that out of the teaching of the evangelists and Mohammedan law-givers he would make a new religion, if God gave him health and strength. It is hardly necessary to add that this work did not go on.

A year before the above-mentioned translation was made, the Moravians thought of sending missionaries to labour among the fire-worshippers of Persia. They did not find means to carry out their design until seven years after (1746), when Hokker, a physician, and Rueffer, a surgeon, arrived in the country. Persia was then in a very unsettled state, and the missionaries were more than once robbed and otherwise maltreated on their journey. At Ispahan they were told that the fire-worshippers of Kerman had been dispersed, and they set out to return home. Rueffer died in 1749, before he reached Europe.

Some Baptist missionaries, about the year 1806, published the Book of Psalms in Persian. It was their intention to have continued the translation of the Scriptures, but circumstances prevented its fulfilment. In the early years of this century, representatives of the Church, and London, and Scottish, Missionary Societies went to Persia, but we cannot find that much was accomplished in the way of conversion. It must be remembered that, according to Mohammedan law, any member of that faith who abjures it is liable to death. Such a sentence is a dead letter now, but it was by no means the case formerly, and was a great obstacle to missionary enterprise in Mohammedan countries. It was in 1811 that Henry Martyn went

to Persia, about three years before he had, at Dinapore, been engaged in superintending Sabat's Persian translation of the Scriptures. This was found not to be written in a sufficiently popular style, and it was in other respects deficient. Martyn, therefore, undertook this journey into Persia so that he might correct the translation himself. Early in 1812 (February 24th), he had finished that of the New Testament.* So many corrections and additions were required, that his version is essentially a new translation. He then translated the Psalms from the Hebrew.

In May he left Shiraz, in which place he had spent nearly a year, for Tabreez, and after remaining some months there, during which time he was much reduced by a severe fever, he went to the Armenian monastery of Echmiazin, near Erivan. He was most kindly received by the monks. Speaking of the patriarch, he says, "His conversation consisted in protestations of sincere attachment, in expression of his hopes of deliverance from the Mohammedan yoke, and inquiries about my translation of the Scriptures, and he begged me to consider myself at home in the monastery. Indeed, their attention and kindness were unbounded. . . . The church was immensely rich till about ten years ago, when, by quarrels between two contending patriarchs, one of whom is still in the monastery in disgrace, most of the money was expended by referring their disputes to the Mohammedans as arbitrators." † Poor Henry Martyn did

* Under date, Feb. 18, 1812 (his birthday), he writes in his diary: "Such a painful year I never passed, owing to the privations I have been called to on the one hand, and the spectacles before me of human depravity on the other, but I hope that I have not come to the seat of Satan in vain."

† When the Rev. George Gordon, of the Church Missionary Society, visited the monastery in 1871, the patriarch's successor explained the great advan-

not live long after his visit to the hospitable Armenian monks; he died October 16th, 1812, at Tocat. On his tomb there appears the following inscription:—

“Rev. Henry Martyn, M.A., chaplain of the East Indian Company, born at Truro, in England, on the 18th of February, 1781, died at Tocat, on the 16th of October, 1812. He laboured for many years in the East, striving to benefit mankind, both in this world and for that to come. He translated the Holy Scriptures into Hindostanee and Persian, and made it his great object to proclaim to all men the God and Saviour of whom they testify. He will long be remembered in the countries where he was known as ‘a man of God.’

“May travellers of all nations, as they step aside and look upon this monument, be led to honour, love, and serve the God and Saviour of this devoted missionary!”*

Upon the suggestion of the American missionaries the tomb which bears the above inscription was erected, a subscription for the purpose being set on foot in England. Martyn was buried in the Armenian burial ground, and for many years his grave was not distinguished by any sepulchral memorial. From his popular manners he was much liked by the Persians, who often had disputes with him. A writer in the *Asiatic Journal*† states that, being in Shiraz, he inquired for evidences of Martyn’s residence

tages of their rule under the Russians. In the sacristy the spear with which our Saviour’s side was pierced, and the hand of St. Gregory, the illuminator, are preserved.

* The inscription is in English, Armenian, Turkish, and Greek. A view of the tomb illustrates Major-General Lake’s interesting notice of Martyn in *Sunday at Home*, August, 1873.

† March, 1830.

there, and made the acquaintance of a man named Mohammed Rahem, who, to his great surprise, was reading a volume of Cowper's poems. He said that when Martyn resided at Shiraz, he went to him at first on purpose to be able afterwards to ridicule the doctrines of the Christians, but was so impressed with the earnestness and power with which he reasoned, that he gradually found his own faith giving way. The missionary gave him a tract to read which he had written in reply to *A Defence of Islamism* by one of the chief priests. Fearing to confess his faith, he avoided the missionary's company, but hearing that he was about to quit Shiraz he visited him. Martyn, as a parting gift, presented him with a copy of the New Testament in Persian, writing on the fly-leaf, "There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.—HENRY MARTYN." Twenty years after this account was written in the *Asiatic Journal*, Mr. Binning visited Shiraz,* and because he could not find Mohammed Rahem, thinks it probable that the whole story was fiction. We should consider it more likely that the convert was dead, or had removed to another city.

Mr. James Fowler met at the table of General Paskevitch, at Erzroum, an Armenian bishop, who proved to be the Serrafino of whom Martyn speaks in his *Journal* (p. 454). Mr. Fowler says, "He described him to me as being of a very delicate frame, thin, and not quite of the middle stature, a beardless youth, with a countenance beaming with so much benignity as to bespeak an errand of Divine love. Of the affairs of this world he seemed to be so ignorant that Serrafino was obliged to manage for him respecting his travelling arrangements, money matters, etc.,

* *Journal of Two Years' Travel, etc.*, I. 410.

of the latter he had a good deal with him when he left the monastery, and seemed to be careless and even profuse in his expenditure. He was strongly recommended to postpone his journey, but from his extreme impatience to return to England, these remonstrances were unavailing." *

Martyn's translation of the New Testament was thus recognized by Fetteh Ali Shah:—

"In the name of God, whose glory is over all! It is our high will that our dear friend, the worthy and respectable Sir Gore Ouseley, Envoy Extraordinary from his Majesty the King of Great Britain, be informed that the book of the Gospel, translated into the Persian tongue by the labours of Henry Martyn, of blessed memory, which has been presented to us in the name of the learned, worthy, and enlightened Society of Christians who have united for the purpose of spreading the Divine books of the teacher Jesus (to whose name, as to that of all the prophets, be ascribed honour and blessing), has been received by us, and merits our high acknowledgement. For many years the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were known in Persia, but now the whole of the New Testament is completely translated, which event is a new source of satisfaction to our enlightened mind. With the grace of God, the merciful, we will direct those of our servants who are admitted into our presence to read the said writings from beginning to end before us, that we may listen to their sentiments respecting the same. Inform the members of the above enlightened Society that they receive, as they merit, our thanks." †

* *Three Years in Persia*, I. 120.

† Mr. Fowler thinks it probable that "the enlightened mind" was never once illuminated by hearing the translation alluded to.

Nine years after the death of Henry Martyn, a Persian at St. Petersburg, Mirza Jaffier, translated the Pentateuch into his language, which was printed by the British and Foreign Bible Society. Dr. Kitto* says that Mirza Ibrahim, a Persian attached to Haileybury College, edited this work.† The Calcutta Auxiliary Bible Society, at the expense of the parent Association, have from time to time printed portions of the Old Testament, translated by Archdeacon Robinson. From 1825 to 1842 Dr. Glen, a Scottish missionary, was employed upon a translation of the whole of the Old Testament, which was printed at Edinburgh, chiefly at the expense of the Bible Society. Most of this translation was executed by Dr. Glen when at Astrachan.‡ From these statements it will be seen that the whole Bible has been translated into Persian and published.

One of the most remarkable missionary travellers was Dr. Wolff. Born in 1795, at Weilersbach, near Bamberg, he was the son of a Jewish Rabbi. At the age of seventeen he was received into the Church of Rome at Prague, to the anger of his relations. In 1816 he was presented to Pope Pius VII., who, struck with his intelligence, ordered him to be received as a student in the Propaganda. Two years afterwards he was expelled for the expression of opinions incompatible with his position, and the year 1819 found him in London, and a member of the Church of England. Under Dr. Lee he studied oriental languages at Cambridge,

* *People of Persia*, 128.

† He made an admirable translation of the book of Isaiah, which was printed by the Bible Society in 1832.

‡ Dr. Glen visited Persia in 1838 for the purpose of correcting his translation. The Persian Bible is said to be one of the best versions in any modern oriental language.

being in training as a missionary to the Jews. He visited Persia about 1823, in his first missionary journey, and again during his second great expedition, 1828—33.* It was, we believe, in the latter of these journeys, that Abbas Mirza, the Crown Prince, was informed by Dr. Wolff that he wished to establish schools in Tabreez, and not only acceded to his request, but gave him a house for the purpose.† In 1822 the Basle Missionary Society first sent missionaries to work among some German settlers at Karass, and then advanced to Shushah. Here they established a flourishing colony, and Dr. Pfander published some works which had considerable effect in leading Mohammedans to examine the truths of Christianity. But the Society was not allowed to work long unmolested. Its chief work was done on the frontiers, and the Russian Government prohibited the missionaries to work, as they did

* See his Autobiography, or "*Travels and Adventures of Rev. Joseph Wolff*, D.D., 2 vols. 1861, and *Journal of Missionary Labours*, 1827—38. These are extremely interesting works. In 1827 he married Lady Georgiana Walpole, daughter of the second Earl of Orford. She died in 1859, her husband in 1862.

† The prince thus wrote to Dr. Wolff: "The Rev. Joseph Wolff having been presented to us, has explained the desire and wish he entertained of establishing in our city of Tabreez, and under the patronage of Henry Drummond, Esq., a school for the education of all classes, and of sending from England such teachers as may be necessary to reside here, and to employ themselves constantly in the instruction of children. As this benevolent undertaking is in strict accordance with our feelings, and as the strictest intimacy now exists between the Governments of England and Persia, the proposal of Mr. Wolff has met with our cordial approbation. We have therefore ordered that a house should be given, in order to inspire confident assurance, that when teachers come from England the institution shall always receive from us all due patronage, protection, and support." This letter is quoted by Mr. Fowler (*Three Years in Persia*, I. 324), who says that neither Dr. Wolff nor his patron did anything in the way of establishing these schools, which rather annoyed the prince.

not belong to the Greek Church. This prohibition occurred in 1835. Six years before, Mr. A. N. Groves visited the Basle missionaries at Shushah, and in that year (1829) Dr. Pfander went with him to Bagdad. Twelve months after, a terrible plague ravaged the city, and thousands died. Dr. Pfander had left, but Dr. Kitto was there with Mr. Groves, and we need hardly add that they did every thing they could to alleviate the misery around them. Both Mr. and Mrs. Groves caught the dreadful disease, and the latter died of it.*

In the Armenian quarter of the city of Ispahan, in 1869, the Rev. Robert Bruce, of the Church Missionary Society, laboured with considerable success. He had been ten years as a missionary in India, and had therefore not a little experience. He was joined by the Rev. George Gordon in 1872, who helped him in his humane efforts to mitigate the sufferings of the people during the famine, which took place in that and the previous year. Major-General Lake, to whose interesting papers we have before referred, quotes † the following statement by Mr. Gordon, and brings vividly before us the horrors of that time:—

“No traveller can pass through Persia at this time without being painfully impressed with the awful ascendency of starvation and famine. To a mind not wholly callous to the claims of suffering humanity, it is a terrible thing to witness daily evidence of distress which it cannot

* Mr. Fowler thinks that Mr. Groves's missionary labours among the Turks and Persians were not as successful as they might have been, for, besides neglecting to study the languages carefully, he did not associate himself with any particular church or sect, and the natives esteemed him “a wandering dervish, instead of a respectable moollah or sheik.”

† *Sunday at Home*, September, 1873.

relieve,—to see men, women, and children lying down to die in the snow and frost, with hardly a garment to cover them, or a crust to support them; or to see a mother mourning over her dead child, which she is unable to bury, or a son over his father, while the haggard expression and bony limbs show that it is only a question of days or hours how soon that mother or son will lay down the burden of life, and become the prey of the raven and the jackal. And yet this is no fiction, but what I have daily witnessed. In the streets and bazaars of Teheran, within sight of the bakers' shops and the merchants' stalls, at the doors of the wealthy, and in the pathway of the proud rulers of the land, the helpless victims of starvation and mismanagement are perishing like dogs, and being flung into a nameless grave. It was stated officially by the governor's secretary, that in one night alone in that city, which is but four miles round, there were three hundred deaths, from cold and want."

Mr. Bruce is now engaged on a revised edition of the New Testament.

CHAPTER VI.

LITERATURE : Printing—Newspaper—Early Persian Literature—Mirkhond—Ansari and his Friends—Their Meeting with Ferdusi—The *Shah-Nameh*—Flight of Ferdusi—Character of his Poetry—Sir John Malcolm's Opinion on the Subject.

BEFORE considering Persian authors and their productions let us note the state of printing in the country. We have elsewhere (pp. 215, 216) mentioned the distaste exhibited for printed books, and the appreciation of elegantly written manuscripts. But it is probable that, as the country gets opened up to Europeans, a thirst for information will be excited, education will be more general, and printed books felt to be a necessity.

At present it would be difficult to find a country in which printing is less employed than Persia. There are a few presses for type and lithographic printing, but the books issued from them will bear no comparison with the books printed for the country, both in London and Bombay. The Persians like lithography better than typography, because it looks more like their much-esteemed caligraphy.

The first Persian newspaper published by authority was established at the command of the Shah, in 1850. We believe that a non-official journal had been established by Mirza Saulik, at Teheran, a few years before. But the *Teheran Gazette* is still in existence, and its columns

were recently occupied by the European doings of the Shah. That monarch, on its first appearance, determined that it should not fail for want of a circulation, and accordingly ordered his officers, civil and military, to subscribe to it. An Englishman was employed to translate from the European journals items of news which might safely be placed before a Persian public. Mr. Binning says * these were chiefly accounts of accidents, fires, shipwrecks, robberies and murders, calculated to convey to the Persian mind the idea that life among the Feringhees must be extremely perilous, and how lucky the Persians were to be born in Iran.

Like its European contemporaries, this newspaper had "leaders" which were chiefly in praise of the Shah and his Government. Sometimes these were written by the Prime Minister. At all times he was considered responsible for their contents. This journal was lithographed, and so was another sheet, prepared only for the eyes of the Shah. In the latter were included details, which it would not be wise for a "paternal" government to place before its children. Mr. Mounsey says the numbers of the *Teheran Gazette* he saw in 1866 "contained nothing but a short court circular, long disquisitions on the art of making gold, and the probability of the discovery of the philosopher's stone, almost the only subject in which Persians take any

* The same traveller observes—"A press established with the permission and under the patronage of the Shah is of course not a free one; and taking into consideration the constitution of Persian society and Government, it is better that it should continue under censorship. Much has been said about the advantages and the reverse of a free press in India, and in spite of a popular opinion I greatly doubt the wisdom and propriety of the step, for which Sir Charles Metcalfe has been so highly lauded" (II. 163).

interest." So much for the condition of the "fourth estate" in Iran.

We know very little of Persian literature before the Mohammedan conquest of 636, and this is not to be wondered at, when we consider how the followers of the Prophet delighted to destroy the literary works of any country they conquered, saying there was only one work worthy to be studied, and that of course was their Koran. But, by order of the early monarchs of the Sassanian dynasty (which commenced in A.D. 226), collections had been made for a history of Persia. Yezdijird I. early in the fifth century ordered the Magian priests to form an abstract of this large collection. That volume was taken by Saad, one of the Omar's generals, from the tent of a Persian officer at the battle of Cadesia (636). Omar sent it as a present to the King of Abyssinia, who had copies made, which he gave to his regal friends. About a century and a half after this Saoud Ibn Mansur, the secretary of Abdurrizak, translated the work from the Pehlvi dialect into Persian, and about 837, Yakoub-ben-Seis, the founder of the Soffaride dynasty, ordered the priests to continue the history to the battle of Cadesia. This work, it must be remembered, was put into a poetical dress by Ferdusi, and forms his justly celebrated *Shah-Nameh*, to which we shall presently allude.

Literature did not flourish during the disturbed rule of the Caliphs, but when in the ninth and tenth centuries the descendants of the Abbassides could no longer rule Persia with a strong hand, the independent princes who then rose to power encouraged letters in their dominions. In the eleventh century we have Nizam-al-Muluk, vizier to

the Sultan Alp Arslan, who wrote a history of his own time in Persia. This celebrated man was born c. 1017, in Khorrassan, and in 1064 became Vizier. In this important position he encouraged learning and men of letters, founded the renowned college of Bagdad, but fell by the dagger of an assassin, in 1092.

Passing on to the fourteenth century, we have a popular historian in Yahya Ibn Abdullatif, of Kazwin (d. 1351), who wrote the *Lobb-tawacikh*, or "marrow of history;" and the fifteenth is distinguished in this branch by Mohammed Ben Khavendshah Ben Mahmud, better known as Mirkhond, the learned author of the *Ruzat-us-safa*, or history of prophets, kings, and Caliphs. He was born c. 1432, and died 1498. Portions of this work, which is in several volumes, have been translated at various times; the earliest, we believe, was that issued at Vienna, in 1792, but the work of Mr. Shea is the most accessible.* In the introduction to this work Mirkhond gives his reasons for its compilation, which we here transcribe: "In the spring of life, as well as the period of matured age, which comprehend the most delightful season of existence and the most delicious hours of life, my aspiring mind and soul, ambitious of attaining enlarged views, became inclined—nay, passionately attached, to the perusal of historical records, which alone supply the means of knowing exactly the manners of the nations of the world, and of fully understanding the various customs which prevail among the

* *History of the Early Kings of Persia, from Kaiomars, the first of the Peshadian dynasty, to the Conquest of Iran by Alexander the Great. From the Original Persian of Mirkhond, with Notes and Illustrations by D. Shea. Oriental Translation Fund, 1832. See also Anquetil du Perron's papers on ancient Persian history in the Académie des Inscriptions.*

various races of mankind. From time to time, as I was permitted by general business and particular avocations, which occur to all the children of mortality in proportion to their state in society, I devoted myself to the pages which record past events, and to the narrations of ancient times, until my languid powers of mind and exhausted frame contracted both love for and an intimate acquaintance with such researches.

“I occasionally communicated a few curious anecdotes to a society of learned men and an assemblage of eminent scholars in such a manner as, proving agreeable to persons of such refined accomplishments, obtained their approbation. Many times in the course of these incidents several members of this enlightened brotherhood, decorated with the insignia of eminent accomplishments and adorned with sincerity, not only requested but earnestly urged me to compile and finish a volume on this subject, abounding in profitable instruction to individuals and free from prolixity of narrative, which should include the most important acts of the prophets and apostles with the consequences which have resulted from the deeds of kings and khalifs, at the same time containing the detailed history of puissant chiefs, with a comprehensive account of the great men of former times.”

He was greatly encouraged in his work by Ali Shir, grand vizier of Sultan Hussein, whom, in the following language so beloved by Persians, he describes as “an angelic being in human form, whose noble nature was pre-eminent above all the learned men of the age, in the science of literature and accomplished manners; his comprehensive talents on the perception of the most subtle eloquence,

and the most abstruse deduction of intellect, appeared to discriminating judges the *ne plus ultra* of mind, both among his contemporaries and those of past times. In his guiltless bosom were treasured up the secrets of the invisible world; his gem-scattering lips are the faithful interpreters of the tidings of the infallible volume; the delicate turns of thought in his poems, characterized by eloquence when put into the dress of language, resembling the streams issuing forth from the fountain of life, placed in the regions of darkness." In his preface the author gives ten advantages resulting from the pursuit of historical research; and as these are characterized by great perspicuity, we transcribe two of them:—

Second Advantage.—"By the science of history, gladness and pleasure are attained, the rust of adversity and rebuke are vanished from the mirror of the soul. The intelligent well know that the faculties of hearing and vision hold a high rank among the human senses: and that as the sense of vision receives a pleasure unmixed with pain from the contemplation of beautiful objects, in like manner the sense of hearing is not only exempt from fatigue, while listening to the recital of histories and great achievements, but, on the contrary, receives augmented pleasure and delight, for an interest in historic researches and narratives is impressed on the human constitution, and the dispositions of mankind are by nature formed for such pursuits."

Ninth Advantage.—"The man acquainted with tradition and history is richly endued with the dignity of patience and its excellent results, which form the most distinguished among the dignities of pure and holy personages, for when any one reflects and considers the vicissitudes of fortune,

he discovers how many kinds of woes were undergone by the prophets and apostles (on whom be salvation !) inflicted by the people of old ; also in what manner they endured them, and continued to walk in the path of patience and resignation ; consequently on every occasion, when any great calamity occurs, he too will firmly grasp the mighty handle of patience, and the strong cable of resignation ; thus by adhering strenuously, he will never permit himself to deviate from the path of their imitation. And, without doubt, whoever puts in practice these two meritorious qualities, attains a happy lot in the present and future state, and is guarded against the miseries of both worlds.”*

Khovend-mir, or Khoudemir, Mirkhond's son, followed in his father's footsteps, and wrote the *Khulasat-al-Akhbar* (an abridgement of the *Ruzat-us-safa*), and also the *Habib-us-sayr*, or “Traveller's friend.” The former was written for his father's patron, the Amir Ali Shir. The historian of the seventeenth century was Kasim FERIAHTA.†

Having thus noticed the chief Persian native historians, we now turn to the poets, by far the most popular authors in the country. Of these the earliest of importance is FERDUSI, the Homer of Iran. In order, however, to understand the reason for the composition of his great work, the *Shah-Nameh*, we must go back to the ancient *History of Persia* before mentioned. In the second half of the ninth century the then reigning monarch ordered the poet DAKIKI to turn that history into verse. This he accordingly began to do, but he committed some crime, and before he

* Shea's *Mirkhond*, p. 30.

† Dow translated in 1768 the portion relating to Hindustan, and the work was then published in London.

completed his task was put to death. So matters remained until Mahmud Shah, about the middle of the tenth century, determined that the work commenced by Dakiki should be completed. He had at his palace at Ghazni, where he held his court, several poets, the chief being Ansari. Three copies of the ancient *History* were procured and collated, and portions submitted to seven of the poets to be versified.

On a certain day their poems were submitted to the king, but little time was needed to see that Ansari had distanced his competitors, and it was decided that he should continue the whole work. On the evening of that day Ansari, and two poets, Asjedi and Ferrukhi, entered a garden to talk over the events of the day. A man, travel-stained and footsore, approached them, and while they are devising means to get rid of him, we will describe how Ferdusi—for he it was, according to the story—appeared there at such an opportune moment for his future interests. He was born about the year 937, at Rizvan, near Tus, and was well educated by reason of a dream his father had when he was born. He saw his child ascend the roof of a house, and, turning towards Mecca, utter a shout which was answered by people on all sides. This, he was told, meant that he would be a great scholar of world-wide fame.

He soon began to compose poems, distinguished for felicity and elegance of expression; but little was known of his compositions beyond his family circle. It is uncertain how old he was when the tyrannical conduct of the governor of Tus induced him to seek redress from the king at Ghazni. It is probable, however, that he was

about forty-five years of age when, tired with his journey, he entered the garden, as we have mentioned, and encountered Ansari and his friends. Seeing they were gentlemen connected with the Court, he thought it best to address them.

When he was approaching for that purpose, Asjedi and Ferrukhi told Ansari they would soon order him off; but the latter poet whispered a plan to his friends of getting rid of him in a more courteous manner. When Ferdusi was about to address them, Ansari told him they were three poets who had visited the garden for the sake of quiet, and only admitted poets to their society. He was a little startled when Ferdusi replied that he also was a poet, but said that he might join them if he could complete a verse, three lines of which they would give him. They chose a rhyme in which only three words in the language ended Rushen, Gulshen, and Jushen :—

ANSARI.—“The moon is not more bright than thy cheek.

ASJEDI.—“No rose in the garden can vie with thy lovely face.

FERRUKHI.—“The arrows of thy eyelash pierce the strongest cuirass.”

To their great astonishment, Ferdusi replied :—“Like the spear of Gio in his fight with Pushen,” for he remembered the proper name of a warrior in the *Book of Kings*.* The poets were astounded at this answer, but after they had recovered their surprise, invited Ferdusi † to join them, who so astonished them by examples of his poetical talents, that Ansari, fearing him as a rival at Court,

* We are chiefly indebted for these details to *Biographical Notices of the Persian Poets, with Critical and Explanatory Remarks*, by Sir Gore Ouseley, Bart., Oriental Translation Fund, 1846.

† It should be remarked that Ferdusi is his poetical name, his name being *Abul Kasim*.

determined to prevent his appearance there. But luckily for Ferdusi, he soon became acquainted with one of Mahmud's chief ministers, Mohek, a man who delighted to associate with poets and learned men, and therefore the better fitted to appreciate the talents of the new comer. He could not be long in his company, without hearing of the poetical contest at Court, and its result in favour of Ansari. The latter had been considered extremely successful, in that part of his poem in which he had described Rustem with dagger held over Sohrab, whom he afterwards recognized as his son; at the conclusion of their combat, the vanquished saying: "Should thy soul be thirsting for my blood, and thy bright dagger be stained in it, rest assured that the world will so thirst after thine, that even a single hair will have the effect of a sharp sword on thy body."

Ferdusi said little, but the day after versified the contest between Rustem and Isfendiar, the son of King Gushtasp,* and read it to his friend, the minister, who, thinking it some ancient composition, asked permission to show it to the king. The monarch, charmed with the fragment, asked for the rest of the book, and on Ferdusi being summoned, the fact soon transpired that a living poet of extraordinary power was before him. Ansari, making a virtue of necessity, came forward, and said that no one was worthy to complete the *Shah-Nameh* (or Book of

* The Darius Hystaspes of the Greeks. An interesting account of this combat will be found in Shea's edition of *Mirkhond*, pp. 229—337. Sir J. Malcolm in his *Sketches of Persia*, I. 217, says the rock sculptures at Perseopolis are called *Neksha-i-Rustem*, i.e. the sculptures of Rustem. We refer our readers to pp. 205—234 of the same work for further particulars respecting that hero as related in the *Shah-Nameh*, and its prose abridgement, the *Shemsheer-Khani*.

Kings) but Ferdusi. The Shah ordered a suite of apartments in the palace to be assigned to the poet, that he might often converse with him, and commanded the Prime Minister to pay Ferdusi 1000 drachms of gold for every 1000 couplets he composed.

Now, the poet particularly disliked the Prime Minister, and instead of taking his money on the completion of each thousand couplets, he thought he would wait until the whole poem was finished, and then he could apply the large sum to which he would be entitled, to build a bridge at Tus. Accordingly he worked steadily at the great work for *thirty years*, and at the expiration of that period requested the 60,000 drachms of gold. The minister, glad of an opportunity to slight the poet, represented to the king the absurdity of paying such a sum for one poem, and suggested that Ferdusi should receive 60,000 drachms of silver instead of gold.

Two circumstances besides the expenditure of money induced the king to consent. In the first place, the novelty of having this poem composed had worn off, and also he was by no means pleased by the poet's frequent praise of good birth, being himself the son of Sabaktagin, the favourite slave of the Samanian king, Nasir-ben-Ahmed, who, in consequence of the unsettled state of the country, succeeded that monarch. 60,000 drachms of silver accordingly was the sum sent to the poet, and arrived when he was about to leave the public bath. So annoyed was Ferdusi, that he distributed the whole to the bystanders. This soon reached the ears of the king, who condemned the poet to be trampled to death by elephants, but pardoned him when personally solicited to do so.

Ferdusi, fearing that he should again offend the king, left Ghazni secretly, but before his departure could not resist the temptation of penning a biting satire, which he made one of the king's slaves, on whom he could rely, promise to deliver to the Shah when he should be out of the country. He resided for some time at Bagdad, and then went to end his days in his native city, Tus. After a time the Shah, notwithstanding the satire, regretted that he had behaved so badly to the talented author of the *Shah-Nameh*, and sent the 60,000 drachms of gold, with camel loads of costly silks, velvets, etc., to recompense the poet.* It is said that as the rich train, in 1020, entered the city, a funeral procession passed out. The corpse of Ferdusi was going to its last resting-place !

We must now turn to the great epic poem, the *Shah-Nameh*, described by Sir W. Jones as "a glorious monument of eastern genius and learning, which, if ever it should be generally understood in its original language, will contest the merit of invention with Homer himself." Another writer† compares it favourably with the *Iliad*, and observes: "Ferdusi has been censured for too great diversity of matter and incident; but I am of opinion that this variety is infinitely more charming than the successive council of God, a feast, a fight, a fight, a feast, and a council of Gods, which imparts to the *Iliad* a sameness, rather apt to be tiresome. Homer degrades his gods to something far beneath the level of his men, who are

* The money and presents were afterwards offered to Ferdusi's daughter, who refused them with scorn. The Shah ordered the money to be expended upon a bridge and caravansary at Tus.

† Binning, II. 386.

truculent ruffians at best. Ferdusi's heroes are much more like gentlemen, and his demons and genii behave as such characters ought to do. The entire mythology of Homer, and of most of the classics, is outrageously absurd and irrational, and far more revolting to common sense and decency than anything to be found in the *Shah-Nameh*." Mr. Binning has read the poem in the original—no easy task, for it consists of 120,000 lines—and therefore his opinion is worthier acceptance than that of those who judge from translated extracts.

He says the work is so full of obsolete phrases, that a modern Persian needs a glossary, as an Englishman who reads Chaucer. "A great deal of the *Shah-Nameh* is extremely beautiful; but much of the subject is wildly extravagant, and bears no small resemblance to some of the Welsh romances of King Arthur's Court, with which Lady Charlotte Guest has favoured the public. I have often thought it a pity that we have no English version of the *Shah-Nameh*.* A Mr. Champion, late of the Bengal Civil Service, translated or rather imitated in verse, a portion

* An English edition of the *Shah-Nameh* was published by the Oriental Translation Fund in 1832. It was translated and abridged in prose and verse, with notes and illustrations by J. Atkinson. Champion's work, alluded to in the text, was published at Calcutta in 1785, and also in London in 1790. Prefixed to the latter (according to Lowndes' *Bibliographer's Manual*, Bohn's ed.) is an amusing essay on the life and writings of the poet. A Persian edition in eight volumes was projected in Calcutta in 1811, but only one volume was published. This, however, has a preface in English by Lumsden. Stephen Weston, in 1815, published in London, "Episodes from the *Shah-Nameh* translated into English verse with notes and authorities, a verbal index, Persian and English, and some account of the contents of the whole poem." Lowndes says that a sketch of the life and writings of Ferdusi was privately printed at Manchester in 1823. See also *Retrospective Review*, IV. 200—223.

of it, but his effusions are very tame and spiritless. A good version of a poem in another language can only be made (if it can be made at all) by one who is as good a poet as the author of the original, and who understands his language thoroughly." To the same effect writes Sir J. Malcolm:—"No translation in verse can convey to the mere English reader any just impression of the whole poem of the *Shah-Nameh*. The idiom in which it is written, and the allusions and metaphors with which it abounds, are too foreign to our language and taste to admit of success in such an undertaking; but a prose translation of this great work is a desideratum, and select passages might bear a poetical form. He, however, who attempts such a task will not be successful unless possessed of a genius that raises him above the mechanical efforts of a versifier. If ever such a translator devotes himself to the beauties of this poem, he will find much to gratify himself and others." *

We must find space for one more quotation on the same subject by that author: "It is only justice to this great poet to observe that the exuberance of his fertile imagination, though it led him to amplify and adorn his subject, never made him false to the task he had undertaken,—that of embodying in his great work all that remained of the fabulous and historical traditions of his country. We cannot have a stronger proof of his adherence to this principle than his passing over, almost in silence, the four centuries which elapsed between the death of Alexander the Great and the rise of Ardishir, or Artaxerxes, the founder of the Sassanian dynasty. Advert-

* *Sketches of Persia*, II. 95.

ing to the history of the Parthian kings, he observes, 'When both their root and branches ceased to flourish, their deeds remained unrecorded by any experienced historian, and nothing but their names have I either heard or perused in the annals of the kings of Persia.' " *

There are persons in Persia whose occupation it is to visit person's houses when required, to recite passages from the *Shah-Nameh*. In battle scenes these men display the greatest enthusiasm, and sometimes affect their audience almost as powerfully as if they witnessed the Hussein Passion-play.

* In 1829 the late Major Macan, of the Bengal army, published a fine Persian edition of this work at Calcutta. The elegantly written and beautifully illuminated copies formerly executed in Persia are now very rarely to be obtained.

CHAPTER VII.

LITERATURE: Poets of the 11th and 12th Centuries—Saadi—His Travels—Tomb near Shiraz—The *Gulistan*—Character of Saadi's Poems—Nizami—Hafiz—His Poetry and Religious Opinions—Death of Hafiz—His Tomb—Kurroglou, the Bandit Minstrel—Mr. Chodzko's Remarks—Persian and Arabian origin of European Tales—Libraries.

To the eleventh century belong Asidi of Tus, and Abu-l-ola, surnamed Alami (the blind), but these possessed little originality. They were followed by Feleki and Ibrahim Khakani, the latter being very successful in the composition of popular odes. The twelfth century was distinguished by Anwari and Abd-el-Jelil, both being natives of Khorassan.

But we must pass on to the latter part of the same century, when at Shiraz, the Athens of Persia, Saadi was born. The date of his birth is somewhat uncertain, but Sir Gore Ouseley, quoting Doulat, places it at 1198. His name was Muslah-ud-din; the poetical title of *Saadi* he derived from Atabeg Saad ben Zengi, who then ruled Fars. At the Nizamian college of Bagdad he was educated, and, on leaving, became the pupil of Sheikh Abdul Kudir Gilani, a distinguished professor of the Sufee creed. Saadi did not embrace the doctrine in any of its sceptical forms, but travelled as a dervish, and made the pilgrimage to Mecca no less than fifteen times.

He did not travel about with his eyes shut, for, to use his own words, "I have wandered to various regions of the world, and everywhere have I mixed freely with the inhabitants; I have gathered in each corner; I have gleaned an ear from every harvest." His travels were not without their perils. On one occasion he was taken prisoner in the Holy Land, but was ransomed by a man whose daughter he married. With her he lived most unhappily, and experienced the truth of the Persian proverb: "A bad woman in the house of a virtuous man is his hell even in this world." Sir Gore Ouseley * says that, with the exception of the celebrated Ibn Batuta, Saadi was the greatest Oriental traveller on record, for he had traversed Asia Minor, Barbary, Abyssinia, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Armenia, all the provinces of Persia, and many of those of India. His works show that he was an accomplished linguist. M. De Tassy † observes that he was the first person who composed verses in the Hindostani language, called *Rikhtah*.

Towards the latter end of his life Saadi appears to have become a contemplative Sufee, of a strict type, for he retired to a little cell near Shiraz, and lived a hermit's life. He was visited by celebrated men from all parts, and he appears to have lived upon the food they brought him; but we are told that he did not forget the poor, but placed food in a basket outside his cell for their use. It was in the year 1291 that the poet died at an advanced age, or, as a Persian author has poetically expressed it, "when the pure soul of Sheikh Saadi, like a Phoenix, spread its wings and fled from its earthly prison."

* *Biographical Notices of Persian Poets*, 1846, p. 10.

† *Journal Asiatique*, Jan. 1843.

His tomb is about two miles in a north-easterly direction from Shiraz, and is one of the "lions" of that city. Sir J. Malcolm, in the beginning of 1811, passed some months there on his way as ambassador to Teheran. He says the tomb was so dilapidated that he offered the Governor of Fars a sum of money to repair it. This scion of royalty promised to have it repaired himself, but of course did not do so. Mr. Binning was there in 1850, and thus describes the *saadiya*, or enclosure, containing the tomb:—

"A high brick wall encloses a square court, on one side of which is the building, consisting of three small chambers in the centre, having two other rooms above them, and flanked by two large vaulted apartments, entirely open in front to the weather. . . . In the open apartment to the southward is the tomb of Saadi, the grave being covered with a stone sarcophagus of oblong quadrangular shape, like a chest, open on top, and many small pinnacles at the corners. It is broken through the middle, and the inscriptions with which it is covered are much obliterated. I looked in vain for the dates of the poet's birth and decease. This monument is the original one placed over the bard's remains; but the edifice containing it was erected by Kureem Khan. The whole building is dirty and dilapidated. It is used as a sort of caravansari, or lodging for dervishes, or any wanderers who may choose to take up their temporary abode here."

Saadi's principal work is the *Gulistan*, garden or "bed of roses," a mystic and moral poem.* Some consider

* This work has been frequently published: *Select Fables from Gulistan*, translated by S. Sullivan, London, 1774; *The Gulistan*, with an English translation, by Gladwin, Calcutta, 1806, reprinted in London, 1808 and

this the finest poem in the Persian language. The author thus explains its title: "On the first day of the month of Ardabihisht, I resolved, with a friend, to pass the night in my garden. The ground was enamelled with flowers; the sky was lighted with brilliant stars; the nightingale sang its sweet melodies, perched on the highest branches; the dew-drops hung on the rose like tears on the cheek of angry beauty; the *parterre* was covered with hyacinths of a thousand hues, among which meandered a limpid stream. When morning came, my friend gathered roses, basilisks, and hyacinths, and placed them in the folds of his garments; but I said to him, 'Throw these away, for I am going to compose a Gulistan (garden of roses) which will last for eternity, whilst your flowers will live but for a day.' " *

Though Saadi has written more than Hafiz, his works are not so generally popular as those of that poet. The priests, and their admirers among the laity, prefer Hafiz because his creed was of Shiah character. But still portions of Saadi are very beautiful, and his writings furnish a number of those moral maxims † and proverbial

1827; an edition in Persian, with notes by Mr. Eastwick, Hertford, 1850, and a translation of the same by that author, 1853. Lowndes says there is another work by Saadi, called the *Discourses*, and that a correspondent in Aikin's *Athenæum Magazine*, III. 45 and 256, gives some translated specimens, remarking that they are less known in Asia than any other works of the poet.

* Quoted in Rimmel's *Book of Perfumes*, 129.

† Here are two examples quoted by Malcolm :—

"Alas! for him who is gone, and has done no good deed;
The trumpet of march has sounded, and his load is not bound on."

And :—

"Be merciful, and you will gain victories without an army,
Seize the hearts of mankind, and become the conqueror of the world."

The latter is addressed to monarchs.

phrases with which all Persians love to adorn their conversation.

Perhaps the most popular of the poems of Nizami, or Nidami (d. 1180), is the *Loves of Laili and Majnun*, which Mr. Atkinson translated in 1836 for the Oriental Translation Fund. Sir John Malcolm says, as an epic poet Nizami is esteemed next in rank to Ferdusi. One of his chief works is the history of Alexander the Great. We must not omit to mention Jelal-ed-din (d. 1262), commonly called the Moollah of Room, for his great religious work, the *Musnavi*, may be called the Koran of the Sufees, so highly is it prized by members of that form of belief.

Shems-ed-din Mohammed, surnamed Hafiz, "a rememberer," was born at Shiraz, early in the fourteenth century, the precise date of his birth does not appear to be known. He early manifested a love of retirement, and made such good use of his time that he soon gained an intimate acquaintance with the masterpieces of literature and the wonders of science. He soon began to express his thoughts in poetry, but, unlike Saadi, he hated travelling, and never went out unless obliged.

Sultan Ahmed, of Bagdad, hearing of the talents of Hafiz, sent to the poet to take up his residence at his court. The brilliant offer had no charms for the poet, and he preferred to remain in seclusion. He composed a great many poems, chiefly odes, but they were not collected into a volume until after his death. Mr. Binning observes, "It has been a matter of dispute whether the poetry of Hafiz is to be taken in a literal or figurative sense, and whether the wine, roses, nightingales, music, love, and intoxication, which form his favourite themes, are to be considered as actually intended

bonâ fide, or to be viewed in a metaphorical and spiritual light. Mohammedans are mostly of the latter opinion, but for the sake of the Anacreon of the East, I hope they are mistaken. A great deal of his poetry is, I am positive, far too natural and ingenuous to be otherwise than really meant, though there is also much of the allegorical and mystical; and many of the recondite meanings and holy allusions discovered since his days were, I am convinced, never intended or contemplated by the bard himself, but have been invented by some of those wiseacres who delight in finding such mares' nests, and in turning plain sense into mystified nonsense."

But it is this very uncertainty respecting their literal or figurative signification which makes the odes so universally popular in Persia. "Hafiz," said an intelligent Persian to Sir J. Malcolm, "has the singular good fortune of being alike praised by saints and sinners. His odes are sung by the young and the joyous, who, by taking them in the literal sense, find nothing but an excitement to pass the spring of life in the enjoyment of the world's luxuries; while the contemplative sage, considering this poet as a religious enthusiast, attaches a mystical meaning to every line, and repeats his odes as he would an orison."* It

* Sir Gore Onseley observes, "The Sheikhs and Sufi poets all agree in considering the *Diwan* (collection of odes) of Hafiz as the acmé of perfection. The origin of lyric poetry may certainly be ascribed to Sheikh Saadi; but the alteration in the style of the *Ghazl*, or ode, introduced by Hafiz is supposed to have carried that species of composition to a higher state of polish. His rules, therefore, have been followed by succeeding poets, until Baba Feghani, of Shiraz, invented a third sort, and Mirza Saib, of Ispahan, a fourth, which is now generally adopted." (*Biographical Notices of Persian Poets*. O. T. F., p. 36.)

is quite certain that in some parts the odes of Hafiz are by no means edifying.

In religious matters he was not thought quite orthodox. Shah Shujaa, son of Mohammed Ibn Muzafer, thought he could, from the latter circumstance, get Hafiz into trouble with the priests. The fact was he was a poet, and on one occasion, speaking sneeringly of some of Hafiz's productions, the latter hinted that they were known all over the world, whilst those of "his Highness" did not pass the gates of Shiraz. Hafiz soon after composed an ode, in which this couplet occurred: "If this be the true faith that Hafiz professes, alas! that to-day should be followed by to-morrow."

The prince thought this afforded him opportunity for revenge, but Hafiz had a "friend at court," who informed him of this intention, so when he was summoned before the Ulema, the couplet was found succeeding another which Hafiz had found means to insert, thereby rendering the heretical couplet harmless. The inserted one was: "How sweetly the song stole on my ear this morning, from the Christian cup-bearer at the door of the tavern, accompanied by the drum and flute, when he said, 'If this,' etc."

When Hafiz died, in 1388, the priests thought, from the character of some of his poems, that he was unworthy of religious sepulture. A *fal*, or "lot," was tried, the reference being to some of his writings. It is said that the verse thus indicated was, "Withdraw not from the bier of Hafiz; for though sunk in sin, he will still go direct to heaven." As we have elsewhere remarked, this method of ascertaining the decrees of fate is extremely popular. In the year 1835, a dervish of great sanctity of life was about

to be buried near the tomb of the poet. Some persons objecting, a *fal* was taken. In this case the verse was, "The sockets of mine eyes may serve as thy resting-place. Be pleased to alight here, for this abode is thine own." After such a coincidence, could there be any doubt? It has been more than suspected that great personages have occasionally, to humour the people, taken a *fal*, but caused a favourable reply to be arranged beforehand. This is believed to have been the case with Nadir Shah, who, in his Affghan engagement, visited Shiraz, and took a *fal* at the tomb of Hafiz. This verse appeared: "It is befitting that thou shouldst exact duty from all the great ones of this world; for in truth thou art the crown and paragon of all nobility. Cathay and Tartary tremble at the glance of thy vivid eyes; China and India must pay tribute to thy curled locks."

The garden, called the Hafiziya, which contains the tomb of the poet, is close by the city of Shiraz. This garden contains both a burial ground and pleasure garden. In the centre of the former is the tomb, covered with a large slab of yellow and red Yezd marble, placed there by Kureem Khan (1753—79). Two of the poet's odes are sculptured on its surface, but the tomb and surrounding walls were much injured by the earthquake of 1825. Not content with rebuilding the tomb, Kureem placed in the hands of its custodian a fine copy of the odes of the poet. This is much used for taking *fals*.

Hafiz wrote at least six hundred odes, most of which are included in the *Divan*, or great collection of his poems.*

* The first English translation of the odes of Hafiz was published in London (1774), being translated by John Richardson, F.S.A. Dr. Adam

Mr. Binning * has given translations of twelve of these odes, rendering them into prose to give an idea of their subject-matter. No. 8 is the following:—

“The season of spring has arrived: endeavour now to be merry and gay while thou art able, for the roses will bloom again and again after thou art laid under the sod.

“I will not venture to advise thee with whom to associate, or in what way to hold revels, for all this thou well knowest if thou art prudent and sensible.

“The harp in its lively strains will instruct thee how thou shouldst act. Come! and let this admonition produce its good effect if thou art wise.

“Cares and anxieties about worldly things wear away one’s life in vain, if you suffer yourself to be harassed night and day with such vexatious matters.

“Behold! every green leaf thou seest in the meadow unfolds to thee a fresh volume of existence; it would be a pity that thou shouldst continue unmindful of the works of Providence.

“Though the path which leads from hence to the bosom of our Eternal Friend be rugged and dangerous, still the journey is easy when one knoweth the desired goal.

“O Hafiz! if fortune be thy helping friend, thou wilt follow no pursuit save that great object alone.”

To the same period belongs Jami,† so called from Jam,

Clarke spoke very highly of this work. It was followed by select odes, translated and with notes by John Nott. London, 1787. Four years after a Persian edition was published in Calcutta, and in 1800 another English collection of odes appeared, containing an account of a Hafiz MS. in the Cheetham Library at Manchester. London, 1800.

* *Two Years in Persia*, 252—265.

† See *Resemblances Lineal and Verbal*, a philological poem in Persian, by Jami, translated by F. Gladwin, edited by Rev. J. W. Hindley. London, 1811.

his native city, a popular Persian poet, and author of the Beharistan (spring).^{*} Merwaridi (or the dealer in pearls[†]), who died 1576, wrote a history of Shah Ismail, and a collection of odes, called *Munis-al-ahbab* (the companion of the lovers), besides an unfinished romance.

During the reign of Shah Soofe (1627—41) and Abbas II. (1641—67), Kurroglou, the bandit minstrel of northern Persia, flourished. Mr. Chodzko, formerly attached to the suite of the Russian minister at Teheran, has published translations of many of his improvisations.[‡] He tells us the poet was a Turkman Tuka, and a native of northern Khorassan. With his band of hardy followers he hovered about the route between the cities of Khoi and Erzroum, and was the terror of the caravans compelled to go that way from Persia to Turkey. His poems, which chiefly consist of war and love songs, are extremely popular with the wandering tribes of Persia; and this is not to be wondered at, when the similarity of their modes of life is considered.[§]

The improvisations of Kurroglou were not what we might call the artificial productions of a cultivated intellect, or, as Mr. Chodzko observes, "Everything in him and

^{*} Extracts from this poem were published in *Anthologica Persica*, 1778.

[†] So called for his beautiful versification (*Literature of Persia: Penny Cyclopædia*).

[‡] *Specimens of the Popular Poetry of Persia, as found in the Adventures and Improvisations of Kurroglou*. Translated by A. Chodzko. Oriental Translation Fund, 1842. In this volume are added some of the songs of the people inhabiting the shores of the Caspian.

[§] "I knew a very wise man that believed that if a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation." —Andrew Fletcher, of Saltoun (1653—1716), letter to the Marquis of Montrose.

around him is merely human, cut out by the pattern of every-day men, and more particularly by the measure of the ideas and inclinations of his countrymen, who to the present day are fond of plundering, boasting, drinking, and all sensual pleasures. Even the exaggeration—the *sine quâ non* of all Asiatic poetry—is as sober and as moderate as the invisible love of the marvellous amongst Oriental nations could admit. The ideal of Rustem is service and fidelity to his crowned master; the ideal of Kurroglou is the fidelity of a warrior to his knightly word, and, above all, a wild unbounded freedom. This is the only star his eye can see in the moral heaven, and following its light alone he meets with adventures which remind us of the heroes of Cervantes and Ariosto. He does not well understand other virtues and vices, or rather he conceives and interprets them according to his nomadic habits of thought and feeling." In all these improvisations, therefore, the power of might against right is apparent; but we must do Kurroglou the justice to say that miserly appreciation of wealth for its own sake is absent. The free-handed robber of the desert dispenses his gains while they last with a right royal hand, and when they are gone vaults into the saddle to obtain more plunder from the next passing caravan.

Although it is interesting to refer to a translation of these improvisations, we can quite understand, as Mr. Chodzko says, that "the powerful and manly language, the lively rhythm of the verse of the highwayman poet, create a sort of wild and bold harmony inimitable in any translation;" and he continues, "Kurroglou can never fight unless he improvises first. His song is like the rattle of

the snake, like the hiss of the adder,—he must whistle before he bites.”

When Mr. Binning was at Kohrood, a minstrel entertained him with lays of this famous bandit minstrel. These are in the Toorkee language, which differs very much from the Turkish of Constantinople, though both came from the same source, the former being its purer form. He remarks how different are the popular ballads of the Orientals to our old English ones, with their manly warm-hearted heroes.

Since the time of Kurroglou, no poet, or, indeed, any other writer of importance, has appeared in Persia; and having noticed the chief poets of the country,* we turn to works of a general nature. Of these there is a remarkable dearth, the Persians caring for little else besides poetry. In the time of Saadi, Ferid-ed-din Attar wrote a book of proverbs, under the title of *Pendnameh* † (book of the council). Fables and tales are also popular, but the latter are chiefly borrowed from the Hindus. It is difficult for us to understand how these fables and tales should occupy such an important position in Eastern economy; but we must remember that it is only through their instrumentality that the despots, both of regal and domestic circles, can be addressed. Many an unpleasant truth has been brought home to the minds of such personages by

* Plenty of verses are still made in Persia not worthy, we need hardly add, of the term poetry. Sir J. Malcolm (*Sketches of Persia*, I. 65) says he was overwhelmed with poetical composition, every man in Persia who can make two lines of poetry in praise of the mission being anxious to change the product of his imagination into solid piastres.

† An edition of this work was published at Paris, in 1819, edited by Sylvestre de Sacy.

their use, when the bare statement would have been unavailing.

Europe is indebted to Persia and Arabia for many of its most valued tales and allegories; but it has been found that those countries in their turn derived them from India. Sir J. Malcolm says, "In spite of the Persian and Arabian cloaks in which tales and fables have been enveloped, the trace of their Hindu origin has been discovered in the various customs and usages referred to, and it has been decided that almost all the ancient tales are taken from the *Hitopadesa*, and that still more famous work, the *Pancha-Tantra*, or more properly the *Panchopakhyan*, or *Five Tales*; while many of the more modern are stolen from the *Katha-Sarit-Sagar*, or *Ocean of the Stream of Narration*, a well-known work which was compiled about the middle of the twelfth century by order of that equally well-known prince Sree Hertha, of Cashmere." Tellers of tales are extremely popular persons in Persia. Those who wish to read a favourite Persian tale* should peruse that of Abdulla, of Khorassan, as related by the Dervish Seffer, in Malcolm's *Sketches of Persia*, I. 177—99, and the account of the visit of Haroun-al-Raschid to the tomb of Nushirvan. (*Ibid.* 262—70).

There are few libraries of any size in the country. Even persons of rank are contented with a very limited number of volumes, such as the works of Ferdusi, Hafiz, and Saadi, and a few romances; but these they peruse thoroughly, in fact, it is not an uncommon thing to find people who can

* See also Button's *Translation of Persian Tales*, London, 1754; Laersix's *Persian Tales*, translated by Dr. King, 1739; and *Persian Tales*, translated from the French, by Ambrose Philips, London, 1714.

repeat large portions of the works of the chief poets by rote. Every cultivated man, however, is able to intersperse his conversation with appropriate quotations, and these give a tone of refinement to social intercourse.

CHAPTER VIII.

COMMERCE AND PRODUCTS: Letter of Queen Elizabeth to the Shah—Sir Anthony and Sir Robert Shirley—John Elton—Jonas Hanway—Black Sea Route—Russian and Southern Routes—Exports and Imports—Persian Merchants—Silk—Carpets—Sword-blades—Pictures—*Papier Maché*—Enamelling—Illuminated MSS.

EDWARD IV. attempted to establish commercial relations with Persia. His plan met with no success, neither did that of Queen Elizabeth, who sent Anthony Jenkinson into the country for the same purpose. The following extract from her Majesty's letter to the Shah is interesting: "By the goodness of the Almighty God, it is ordayned, that those which not only the huge distance of the land and the invincible wideness of the seas, but also the very quarters of the heavens, doe moste farre separte and sette as under, may neverthelesse through good commendation by writing, bothe ease and also communicate between them, not only the conceived thoughts or deliberations, and grateful offices of humanitie, but also many commodities of mutual intelligence. Therefore, whereas our faithful and right well-beloved servant, Anthonie Jenkinson, bearer of these our letters, is determined, with our license, favour, and grace, to passe out of this oure realme, and, by God's sufferance, to travel even

into Persia, and other your jurisdictions, we mind truly with your good favore to sette forward and advance that his right laudable purpose, and the more willingly, for that this his enterprise is groundd upon an honest intent, to establish trade of merchandise with your subjects, and other strangers trafficking in your realms. . . . God grant unto your Majestie long and happy felcite in earth, and perpetuall in heaven. Dated in England, in our famous citie of London, the 25th of the month April, in the yeare of the creation of the world 5523, and of our Lord Jesus Christ 1561, and of our reigne the third." *

During the last year of the reign of Elizabeth, Sir Anthony Shirley,† with his brother Sir Robert, and twenty-six followers, went to Persia. They left England to aid the Duke of Ferrara against the Pope, but finding their services no longer necessary, applied to the Earl of Essex for instructions. He suggested that they should visit Persia, and there can be no doubt that he hoped that some commercial intercourse of importance might be the result. Shah Abbas the Great (1582—1627) was so pleased with the gallant Englishmen, that he readily granted their request for permission to serve in his army.‡

Abbas sent him, in 1612, as his ambassador to James I., and that monarch, in 1626, sent him back to Persia to

* Quoted in Fowler's *Three Years in Persia*, Chap. xii.

† Sir Anthony was born at Weston, in Sussex, in 1565. He served for some years under the Earl of Essex, by whom he was knighted. Died in 1630.

‡ The Persian monarch was presented with "six pair of pendants of exceeding fair emeralds, two other jewels of topazes, a cup of three pieces set in gold and enamelled, a salt, a fair ewer of crystal," etc. (Sir Anthony Shirley's *Travels*, p. 65.) Abbas gave him one thousand tomans, forty horses with rich furniture, besides mules, camels, etc. (*Ibid.*, p. 72.)

arrange a system of commerce. It ended, however, in Abbas agreeing to deliver in Gombroon ten thousand bales of silk in exchange for English cloth, etc., and this appears to have been the only transaction which took place. Mr. Fowler says that John Elton, who went to Persia in 1739, was the first English merchant to carry goods into the country. Nadir Shah's son was then regent, and from him he got a somewhat important document in favour of British merchants. The East India and Turkey Companies feared that Elton's scheme would be injurious to their interests, but, notwithstanding their opposition, Parliament legalized the Caspian trade—for the goods were to go *viâ* Russia.

The enterprising Jonas Hanway* entered Persia four years after, being entrusted by some merchants at St. Petersburg, who had entered into the new trade, with the charge of a caravan containing £5000 worth of woollen goods. His caravan was plundered, but Nadir Shah ordered reparation to be made him for the loss. English products, however, chiefly found their way into Persia by way of India, and a good trade was also done by the Georgian merchants, who brought Russian goods into the country *viâ* Tiflis, exchanging them for raw silk, and other Persian articles.

In the historical portion of this work we have mentioned that Sir John Malcolm, in his second diplomatic

* Jonas Hanway was born at Portsmouth, in 1712. His travels in Persia were published in two quarto volumes, and are very interesting. It was this work that enabled Sir J. Malcolm to astonish Fetteh Ali Shah by his knowledge of that king's ancestors. Hanway will, however, be chiefly remembered for his benevolence; he mainly contributed to found the Magdalen Hospital and Marine Society. He died in 1786.

visit to Persia in 1810, concluded a commercial treaty. On the decease of Fetteh Ali, this treaty became, according to precedent, null and void, but another was (October 28, 1841) concluded at Teheran by Sir J. McNeil. By this British goods had to pay five per cent. duty.

About eleven years before the latter date, an agent of that intelligent prince, Abbas Mirza, probably at the suggestion of his master, sent a ship laden with English goods from Constantinople, by the Black Sea,* to Trebisonde. It may be wondered why this obviously direct route had not been tried before, but the fact was, that the navigation of the Black Sea was considered so dangerous, that only a very lucrative trade would have tempted mariners.

Before this time not £10,000 worth of goods had been received at Trebisonde from Constantinople; after it, the amount soon rose to £1,000,000. The Persian merchants imported these goods to the central districts of Persia, by way of Erzroum and Tabreez, the capital of the province of Azerbijan. This trade, viâ Trebisonde, the Turks have allowed to pass to the Russian port of Poti. Major St. John has recently pointed out,† that by upholding free trade in the Caucasus, Russia has now gained complete possession of the northern carrying trade. Her other route is by way of the Volga and Caspian Sea to Enzelli. Baron Reuter's scheme will develop these northern routes, the only result being, as Major St. John observed, to throw the monopoly of

* It was called the Black Sea from the dark appearance of its shores.

† See his paper, on trade routes in Persia, read before the Geographical Section of the British Association at Bradford, September 19, 1873.

the carrying trade into the hands of Russia, who could then prohibit the sale of any article by the simple imposition of heavy duties in the Caucasus. He thinks that if Persia opened a railway from Bunder Abbas to Ispahan, or from the latter place to Shuster, she would be independent of Russia.

It only remains for us to notice the southern trade. This is carried on through Bushire, on the Persian Gulf, and by this port, of course, Persia receives the goods she imports from British India. The British India Steam Navigation Company sends weekly steamers from Kur-rachee to the Gulf.

Persia exports raw silk, cotton, wool, horses, drugs, preserved fruits, and tobacco, and imports Manchester goods, tea, sugar, iron, fire-arms, glass, etc.* Many of these imports—sugar, for instance—might be manufactured in the country; and if the roads were improved, substances now wasted might be with profit exported. Mr. Watson † says that, as the imports exceed the exports, Persia is annually drained of a large amount of the precious metals, to make up the balance. It appears to us that the country for many years has been existing upon her capital, or, in other words, upon her metallic reserve; and if she had not entered upon a career of reform, which it is to be hoped will have the effect of developing her resources, her imports would have been necessarily reduced to the same amount as her exports.

As might be supposed from the despotic nature of the

* See *Special Catalog der Ausstellung des Persischen Reiches*, Wien, 1873, for a detailed account of the productions of Persia arranged in provinces.

† *History of Persia*, chap. i.

Government, commerce does not flourish as it does in other countries. But merchants form the most independent class in the country, taking care to make as little show as possible, so as not to be supposed the possessors of great wealth, for a rich man is in constant danger in Persia. The fact that so few Jews can exist in the country speaks volumes for the trading qualities of its merchants.

We hope, however, that Mr. Binning exaggerates the character of the latter, when he says: "In this country no merchant can afford to be what we should consider an honest man. If he keeps his word, pays his debts, honours bills when due, and restores money entrusted to him, he is sure to be marked as a rich man, which is tantamount to being a criminal, and he will as surely be liable to be persecuted, fleeced, and screwed without mercy. However good his intentions may be, he must affect to put off engagements or to meet them with the greatest difficulty, otherwise his rapacious rulers will mark him for their prey. To thrive, a man must dissemble, lie, and cheat with all his might. . . . Among these merchants, I doubt not there are many who would be honest if they could; but under a corrupt and oppressive government, dissimulation and falsehood are compulsory accomplishments." * The legal rate of interest is twelve per cent., but this is considered an extremely low rate; and so scarce is money, that forty, fifty, and sixty per cent. is frequently obtained for loans.

There can be no doubt that if Persia would improve her silk, the staple product, the demand for this export

* *Two Years in Persia*, 299, 300. The taxes on trades are demanded from the chief of each trade, a person specially appointed for the purpose, who is informed the amount his craft has to contribute, and it is his business to divide this among the various tradesmen, so that each pays his proper quota.

would vastly increase. It is chiefly supplied by the province of Ghilan, though Mazanderan contributes a coarser quality. The former province produces at least two millions of pounds weight annually. The inferior quality of Persian silk is chiefly owing to its being wound upon large wheels. At Constantinople it is chiefly used to mix with silk of a superior quality.

The yield is divided into four qualities, the fourth of which is not exported. Those who have had anything to do with Orientals will readily understand that the efforts which have been made to induce the Persians to alter their method of winding the silk have not been successful. At the request of Abbas Mirza, Mr. Armstrong, an Englishman, undertook to introduce the manufacture of cloth in the country. Mills were erected near Tabreez, but the cloth produced was of a very poor quality.*

A good deal of the silk produced in Persia is manufactured in the country. Mohammed forbade the use of silk garments to his followers, so fabrics are produced for Moslems, in which cotton is combined; but some pure silks are produced at Ispahan, and are very beautiful. So also are the gold and silver brocades and imitations of Cashmere shawls made of Kerman wool.

But the most valuable manufacture is that of carpets. These have a durability of texture and richness of colouring quite unrivalled. The colours employed are permanent, and great ingenuity and taste are displayed in the patterns. Good ones are made at Yezd, and in the neighbourhood of Kermanshah. Each side of a Persian carpet

* In Shiraz formerly there were five hundred weavers' factories; there are now only about ten, and these make a coarse cotton fabric called *Kerbas*.

is presentable. Carpets of a cheap and common kind are made at Shiraz. If a piece of red hot charcoal is placed upon a carpet of the finest quality, a brown spot will be singed, but when this is brushed off not the least trace remains. This is a test of a good carpet.* It is said in Persia that every one of any education can judge of the value of a horse, a carpet, or a shawl. The large carpets made at Tarahan, in the south-west of the country, are much prized. The greatest care is taken to blend the colours in an effective manner. Some would prefer, perhaps, the gayer appearance of the Khorassan carpets; but they are not woven so firmly, nor are the colours so lasting. The district of Atrek furnishes carpets of the highest quality. Many carpets are now manufactured for the European market of comparatively small size, so that by the addition of borders they can be made to fit any room.

Very effective, serviceable carpets, generally of the unshorn varieties, are made by the women of the nomadic tribes. With four sticks placed in the ground, and other simple contrivances, it is astonishing what good effects are produced.

Ispahan used to be celebrated for its sword-cutlers, and even now, though the manufacture has declined, good blades are produced. One of these, if of the best quality, ought to cut through a half-inch bar of iron, or an eider-down quilt. Indian steel is employed in their fabrication. Swords made at Ispahan, by Assad-Ullah, *temp.*

* Binning, II. 357; Mounsey, 293; Kitto, 184; Ussher, 512; and *Inventaire des Meubles de la Couronne*, 1673. The chief reason that carpets in Persian houses look so fresh is that every one leaves his slippers at the door.

Abbas the Great, are much prized, and also those made by the cutlers brought from Damascus by Timour, who settled in the towns of Khorassan. We transcribe from Mr. Binning's pages* the following respecting the manufacture of Persian swords :—

“When the blade has been hammered out of the *koors*, or cake of Indian steel, it is put in the furnace, and kept there all night, subjected to the action of a low fire. In the morning it is taken out, smoothed, and filed into shape, and then heated red-hot and immersed for a few moments in a trough filled with castor oil. It is next polished, sharpened, and the hilt and scabbard fitted to it, and the last thing done is to bring out the *jowher*, or damask pattern. For this purpose, the blade is perfectly cleansed from oil or grease, and a yellow kind of stone is ground to powder mixed with hot water in a cup, which must be of china or glass, not metal, and the solution laid on over the blade with a piece of cotton, two or three times : this exhibits the black jowher perfectly. The scabbards of Persian swords are all made of thin laminæ of wood, joined together and covered with black leather, with a sort of pattern stamped on the outside. They are generally quite plain, but a few intended for princes are mounted with gold and jewellery.” A sword sometimes costs as much as £200.

Fire-arms are also made at Ispahan, but chiefly with the old-fashioned flint locks. As might be supposed, the Persians of the higher classes prefer the English percussion system, and get English-made guns. We do not suppose the breech-loading system has been seen in the country.

* *Two Years in Persia*, II. 129.

The artisans who used, about one hundred and twenty years ago—for archery at that time fell into desuetude—to make bows, arrows, and quivers, now make embroidered leather saddles, slippers, and kaleon (or pipe) tubes. Earthenware and glass are manufactured at Shiraz, but these industries are not brought to any perfection.

Spoons of the wood of the pear (*goolabee*) and box (*shimshad*) are made in some parts. They have very long handles, which are beautifully carved, and, being extremely delicate, are more fitted for show than use.

Mohammed forbade his followers to make the likenesses of living things, but the Shiahhs do not consider that this prohibition refers to pictures, and so the Persian palaces are adorned with frescoes generally illustrating court life of previous periods. Unfortunately the Persian artists do not understand perspective, and therefore their skill in the manipulation of colours is not seen to the best advantage.* Sculpture of course is not allowed, but it is interesting to notice in their paintings some of the same principles observable in ancient Persian sculptures. For example, in the paintings where the king is represented, he is delineated as of great size compared with his courtiers, and when Europeans are introduced they are also made of smaller proportions than the Persians. This system of indicating royalty by size is a prominent feature of ancient Persian sculpture.

Some of the *Kalmdans*, or pen-cases made of *papier maché*, are often exquisitely ornamented with miniature paintings. Small articles are also made of a wooden

* Some of the best of these paintings are to be seen in the Chehel Sitoon, or Hall of Audience, in a palace of Shah Abbas at Ispahan.

mosaic work or marquetry, like our "Tunbridge ware." But it is perhaps in enamelling that the Persians display most artistic taste. This is chiefly applied to the heads or bowls of the kaleons, which are generally of gold, silver, or copper. The devices on these, often of great beauty, are first beaten up in relief upon the metal—like French *repoussé* work—and then the enamel pastes applied to the surface. The object is then carefully burnt in a furnace, great care being taken not to expose it too long to the influence of heat, for then the colours would run.* Kaleon-heads, coffers, and other objects, are also made of copper † engraved, and this work when well done is very effective.

But a skilled artificer in Persia has little inducement to excel in his particular art, for when it is known that a man possesses undoubted talent in this way, it is probable that the local magnate will compel him to work for him *volens nolens*, his remuneration depending on the caprice of his master.

Another Persian artistic speciality is the illumination of manuscripts;—as in the beautiful productions of this character executed in Europe in the Middle Ages, the illuminated decorations were painted by artists who had nothing to do with the text of the book. Of course it would have been a waste of time for such artists to have written the book, and that work was accordingly given to inferior men. The illuminations in Persian MSS.

* A kaleon head, ornamented in this manner, of the best quality, will fetch 100 tomans (£50), or even more. Some are made of a polished cocoa-nut, ornamented with patterns in silver and gold.

† Copper comes from the mines of Mazanderan and Kerman. Jewellery is generally ornamented with turquoises (*feruzas*) from the mines of Nishapour, in Khorassan. Good stones are much prized, and often fetch 100 tomans.

exhibit the same faults of perspective as their pictures, but they are effective from the brightness of the colours which are heightened with gold. The borders are also ornamented with arabesque designs in gold and colours. The penmanship of these MSS. and also of those not so ornamented is very beautiful, the Persian characters being well suited for caligraphic display.

It is the appreciation in which these MSS. are held which has been the chief bar to the employment of printing to any extent in the country. Lithography is more suited to the purpose. Very large prices are often paid for examples of writing by celebrated penmen. Sir J. Malcolm says he has known £7 given for four lines written by Dervish Mujid, a famous caligrapher.

CHAPTER IX.

ARTS AND SCIENCES : Seals—Coins—Failure of the Attempt to Improve the Coinage—Porcelain—Music—Medicine—Ophthalmia—Bleeding performed by Barbers—Astronomy and Astrology—*Fal*, or lot—Mathematics—Solar Time—Months—Days of Week—Country Time—Agriculture and Horticulture—Fruits—Flowers.

As merchants are obliged to entrust their letters to couriers, they generally employ cipher in their correspondence. Great importance is also attached to seals. These are generally of red carnelian set in silver, and are chiefly made at Shiraz. Every seal-cutter keeps a register of the seals he engraves, which have generally upon them, besides the name and title of the owner, verses from the Koran. The importance of seals may be estimated from the fact that letters are generally not signed, but sealed, by the writer.

Persian coins, which are very ugly, are struck by the hammer process. It is interesting to remember that this method was that employed in England until the time of Queen Elizabeth, when the mill and screw took the place of the hammer and punch.* Mr. Brittlebank noticed the coinage of money taking place in the bazaar at Shiraz. He says, "The metal was prepared in long bars, which

* Humphrey's *Coin Collector's Manual*, II. 459.

were placed on a kind of anvil. A piece of the requisite weight and thickness was cut off, and upon this the die was fixed and struck with a hammer, the process being so negligently conducted that sometimes only the edge of the coin was impressed. The operation could be seen by all who chose to stop and observe it; and, judging by the crowd who surrounded the mint, and the general appearance of the place, there must have been a brisk demand for coins.”* From their not being milled at the edges, Persian coins are generally clipped.

The only gold coin is the toman, now worth about nine shillings, and which has the name and title of the Shah on one side, and the date on the other. This coin has gradually depreciated in purchasing power. About two hundred years ago Tavernier estimated it as £3, and sixty years ago, when Sir J. Malcolm penned his history, it was worth £1. The coins most generally used are the silver keran, or khran, about equal to the French franc, and the copper *siyah*, or *shahis*, equivalent to the centime. The gold and silver coins contain less alloy than our own.

About 1864 the Shah determined to improve the coinage, —in fact, to establish it on a European basis. He accordingly ordered his minister in Paris to purchase machinery, and send some Frenchmen to superintend the operations. The men went to Teheran, and a building was erected for the expected machinery. Mr. Mounsey, on returning from his Persian travels in 1866, saw at Enzelli an iron boiler and other machinery on the beach. On asking for what purpose they were intended, he was

* *Persia during the Famine*, p. 143.

informed that they were the above-mentioned coining machines.* The cases in which they had been packed were burnt on the voyage, to enable the steamer to reach the port, and when landed it was found impossible to transport them into the interior.†

It is very uncertain whether porcelain was ever made in Persia—at least, such appears to be the opinion of collectors at the present day. A century and a half ago a different opinion was held. Savory, in his *Dictionnaire Universel de Commerce*, 1720, says, “On fait dans toute la Perse une très grande quantité de *porcelaine*, mais si belle et si parfaite qu’elle se distingue difficilement de celle de la Chine, pour laquelle les Hollandais, qui en apportent beaucoup en Europe, ont assez souvent coutume de la donner.” Chardin in 1650 speaks of porcelain, but he goes on to describe a veritable *fayence*, this term meaning, we need hardly remind our readers, glazed earthenware. Mr. Chaffers says the material of Persian *fayence*, which he thinks was undoubtedly made in the country, is a brilliant white paste or body, but not having the properties of true porcelain, and is identical with the Gombroon ware, which was shipped from that port in the Persian Gulf.‡

* *Journey*, etc., p. 324.

† The ancient coins of Persia from A.D. 226, when Ardshir established the Sassanian dynasty, are well described in Humphrey’s *Coin Collector’s Manual*, pp. 150—157. He says that towards the beginning of the sixth century the art displayed in the Sassanian coins begins to decline, though those of Chosroes are an exception. So bad are those of his daughters, that the usual fire altar is hardly to be distinguished. The Arab coinage ceased in the tenth century, and the sun and lion of Persia appear on the coinage, together with inscriptions from the Koran.

‡ *Marks and Monograms on Pottery and Porcelain*, third edition, 1872, pp. 150—153. See also Marryat’s *History of Pottery and Porcelain*, third edition, 1868, pp. 311—318.

A quotation from Martin Lister's *Journey to Paris*, 1698,* proves that the Gombroon ware was not Chinese porcelain, as some have supposed. Mr. Chaffers says, "The Persian fayence is distinguished by the great brilliancy of its enamel colours, the principal of which are a deep lapis-lazuli blue, turquoise, a vivid emerald green, a red of a dark orange tone, an orange or buff, purple, olive green, and black. The lustres are a rich orange gold, a dark copper colour, and a brass lustre." Many of the mosques in Persia are decorated with beautiful tiles, the earliest of which are of the tenth century.

Music is not generally cultivated in Mohammedan countries, and Persia forms no exception to the rule. The Persians have a gamut of twenty-four *perda*, or notes, but Malcolm says they cannot be said to be further advanced in this science than the Indians, from whom they are supposed to have borrowed it. The effect produced upon travellers is generally unfavourable. Take, for example, Mr. Binning's experiences : † "One day I got an *oostad*, or professor of the art, to come to my house and perform. He brought with him an assistant, and two boys who could sing ; but I must confess I admired none of the performance, vocal or instrumental. The *oostad* played on a *tar*, a kind of guitar, the body of which was made of walnut

* He says: "I expected to find the St. Cloud china to have been equal to the *Gomron ware*, but was much surprised to find it equal to the best Chinese porcelain." The East Indian Company established at Gombroon an entrepôt where Indian and Chinese goods were exchanged for those of Europe. It is believed that from this place Chinese porcelain was first introduced into England, but there is every reason to think that the so-called Gombroon ware was Persian fayence. Horace Walpole at Strawberry Hill had "two basins of most ancient Gombroon china."

† *Two Years in Persia*, II. 315.

faced with parchment. It was strung with five wires, three of brass and two of steel, and played on with a little plectrum of thin silver. The assistant had a *kamoncheh*, a kind of fiddle, about a yard long, with a body or sounding board in the middle faced with parchment. It was strung with catgut, and played on with a bow. The boys had really fine voices, which they utterly spoiled by squalling in *falsetto*. Persian tunes, like all other Eastern music, are not at all to my taste."

It would be difficult to find a country in which the science of medicine is at a lower ebb than Persia. Galen and Hippocrates are still their masters under the names of Galenous and Bocrat. It would be strange if Mohammedans knew anything about anatomy, for the Koran forbids dissection. All diseases, Persian doctors say, are either hot, cold, moist, or dry, and must be cured by a remedy of an opposite nature.

Mr. Scott Waring mentions a case in which a man had a severe attack of heartburn, for which the *hakim* prescribed a large quantity of snow to be heaped upon his breast. Ice is often given to fever patients in considerable quantities. Sir John Chardin was seized with a fever when at Lâr, and the Persian physician *successfully* treated him by applying cold water to his body. Mr. Jukes tried to ascertain if this practice was still continued, and asked a man likely to know. "He told me that he had never heard of the application of cold water to the body in fever, and spoke confidently of its not being the general practice of the modern physicians in Persia. Tepid water to drink, and warm water in which the leaves of the willow had been infused, to bathe the hands and feet, was

more agreeable to their system of treating fevers, except in quartan fevers, when he informed me that cold water was sometimes dashed unexpectedly upon the patient, and cured him. . . . When I mentioned the case of Sir J. Chardin he said, 'It could only have been had recourse to by knowing that Sir John was a European from a cold climate, and that cold, therefore, was congenial with his nature.'"* Fevers are very prevalent in the autumn.

Mr. Binning says its occurrence at Shiraz is chiefly owing to local causes, principally the filthy condition of the badly ventilated bazaars and narrow streets. The country round the city is chiefly limestone; and he thinks that, as in India, fever is generated, by the elimination of carbonic acid from that stone under the action of heat and wet.

For the ague, the doctors sometimes order the patient to be well beaten, and in this curious remedy it is said they are frequently successful. But in any failure of treatment the hakim falls on the Persian doctrine of fatalism. He says, "When it is decided by God that a man is to die, no human aid can be of avail." As might be supposed, this convenient theory is frequently in requisition. The Persian physicians were much averse to vaccination, but after the smallpox had made great ravages, the Shah insisted on its employment.

The people—from bitter experience, doubtless—do not hold their hakim in high estimation, and always try and get a European doctor if they can. They seem to have an idea that every Feringhee † who comes into the country

* Malcolm (*History*, II. 385) quotes this from Mr. Jukes' MS. Journal.

† This term means "stranger," and is generally used to signify a European, Feringhistan being applied to Europe. It is interesting to remember that Feringhee is derived from the famous Verangian Guard who first maintained

must have a knowledge of medicine, and travellers have frequently been pestered with requests to exercise their supposed healing powers.

This feeling has sometimes been made use of by travellers anxious to gain particulars respecting the more obscure features of Persian life, for even the harem is opened to a European hakim. One can quite understand that Persian ladies consult a Feringhee doctor often more on account of curiosity and gossip than illness. Their own doctors, also, administer large quantities of the most disgusting medicines, and this does not tend to make them more popular.

Varieties of ophthalmia are very prevalent in Persia.* Sir J. Malcolm says that in 1800 almost every person in the mission became blind from the glare of the snow. Nearly all the tribes who live in tents have remedies for this, as well as most complaints to which they are subject, the receipts having been handed down for many generations. Accordingly, when Sir John became blind himself, he was delighted to hear of a remedy from the lady of a chief of one of these tribes. She ordered a large basin of snow to be placed before him, over which he was requested to put his head. Suddenly a red-hot stone was thrown into the basin, and a cloak over his head at the same time. A violent perspiration ensued; but after this simple remedy had been twice administered, Sir John was cured!

the descendants of Ruric on the throne of Russia, and then went to Constantinople, to perform the same office for the Byzantine emperor. For particulars respecting their origin, see Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, VII. 427, 428.

* "Great precaution," says Mr. Mounsey (p. 195), "should be taken by travellers to protect the eyes." He found a solution of zinc the best remedy for the inflammation with which his were affected.

It is curious that bleeding and other analogous operations are performed by the barbers. This was the old English custom, for in 1512 an Act was passed to prevent any besides barbers practising surgery within the city of London and seven miles round. They were united into one body in 1540, under the title of Barber-surgeons. A barber-surgeon was known by the pole at his door, which was grasped by the patient, the coloured fillet being used to tie his arm. Afterwards a painted pole was hung out as a sign.*

The Persians' only study astronomy for the sake of astrology, and chemistry for alchemy. They adopt the system of Ptolemy with respect to the form and motion of heavenly bodies; for their religion interferes with their adopting the Copernican method. Dr. Kitto says that an abstract of the latter system has been translated and circulated by Europeans connected with the embassies, but much progress towards a more correct knowledge has not been made. In the mean time astrologers continue to flourish.

A Persian will never undertake any important action until he has learned the lucky moment at which it may be commenced. Sir J. Malcolm says he was surprised to see the Prime Minister, Haji Ibrahim, consulting a Persian about the fortunate moment for putting on a new dress. Seeing Malcolm smile, he said, "Do not think I am such a fool as to put faith in all this nonsense; but I must not make my family unhappy by refusing to comply with forms which some of them deem

* Timbs' *Curiosities of London*, 411, and *Things not Generally Known*, first series, 124.

of consequence." But such scepticism is very rare. In 1806 a Persian ambassador had to go to India, and of course consulted an astrologer as to the favourable moment for departure. He was informed that he must not pass out of his house by the door, or through the gate of the fort, because a dangerous constellation was just opposite. It was actually necessary to make a large hole in the wall of the house, through five other walls, and that of the town, before the ambassador and his suite could happily depart.

Sir John Malcolm made it his practice to humour the Persians by consulting their astrologers.* The Shah has a capital way of managing them. They calculate the exact moment when the new year commences, which is on the 21st of our March. On one occasion, says Mr. Mounsey,† they announced that the sun would enter Aries at half-past four a.m., and the Shah would have to hold his court at that early hour. His Majesty calmly informed the astrologers that they must be out of their

* Here is a specimen of the way in which the Persians speak of the stars : "Praise be to that great Creator that formed heaven and earth, and the heavenly bodies, amongst whose Divine works mankind appears but a small spot. The dark Saturn, like a sentinel in the seventh heaven, is attentive to his interests ; the glorious Jupiter, like an able judge enthroned in the sixth heaven, is watchful of his desires ; and the bloody Mars, with his stained sabre, sits in the fifth heaven, the ready executioner of his maker's wrathful commands ; and the resplendent Sun, encircled by a flaming crown, shines in the fourth heaven with light that he has received from the Almighty ; the beautiful Venus, like a glad minstrel, sits in her elegant apartment in the third heaven, supported by his power ; the feathered Mercury, like a wise secretary, sits in the second heaven, the writer of the Almighty's orders ; the clear Moon sits enthroned in the first heaven, a sign of the Creator's power." (Quoted by Fowler, *Three Years in Persia*, Appendix II. p. 331.)

† *Journey, etc.*, p. 291.

reckoning, and sent them back to renew their calculations. We need hardly add that the new year commenced at a more seasonable hour. But there have not been wanting men, whose writings are much esteemed, who have ridiculed astrology. Such an one was Mohammed Ibn Rushd, who was born at Cordova, and died c. 1198. One of his chief works was the translation of Aristotle from Greek into Arabic.* Alchemists still continue to hunt after the philosopher's stone, some spending their lives in the useless pursuit.

But stars are not alone consulted to find out lucky times. Mr. Binning says a common mode of divination is called the *ilmi shoona*, or science of the shoulder-blade. The blade-bone of a newly-killed sheep is examined for the lines and marks upon it. This has been practised in Scotland within a century, and was called *reading the spaulbane*.

A *fal* or lot is often taken by opening a volume of Hafiz, Saadi, or the Koran, placing the hand upon any passage where the book opens, and endeavouring to make it applicable to the seeker's case. Some of the volumes at the mosques are much worn from their frequent consultation in this manner.

On first seeing the new moon at the beginning of any month, the superstitious Persian shuts his eyes, and then with fear opens them again. If he then sees an ugly person or unlucky object, he will, as he thinks, have bad luck for the whole month. The expounders of the Shiah faith consider this ceremony a highly proper one.†

* Michael Scott translated it from Arabic into Latin.

† The Persian considers the number thirteen so unlucky that he will not name it if he can avoid it.

Perhaps mathematics are understood better than any other science, for the Persians are acquainted with the works of Euclid. They know little about geography, and not understanding the art of surveying, have no good maps of their country. Some time ago some European maps, accompanied with geographical details, were introduced among the nobles and *savants*, but with little result.

Astronomers observe solar time, which was the old Persian custom, until the Mohammedan period of its history. The year, by this method of reckoning, consists of twelve months, each of thirty days, the intercalary days being added to one of them. The months were not formerly divided into weeks. The Mohammedan system is, however, in general use. This comprises three hundred and fifty-five days, is lunar, and consists of twelve months. Thirty-three Mohammedan years make thirty-two of our own. By this method of course the months alter in season each year.

These are their names :—

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| 1. Moharram. | 7. Rejeb. |
| 2. Sefer. | 8. Shaban. |
| 3. Rebi-ul-avval. | 9. Ramazan. |
| 4. Rebi-ul-akher. | 10. Showal. |
| 5. Jemad-ul-avval. | 11. Zul-kaada. |
| 6. Jemad-ul-akher. | 12. Zul-hejja. |

The days of the week are :—

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Yakshambeh (Sunday). | Panjshambeh (Thursday). |
| Dushambeh (Monday). | Adeena, or Joomah (Friday). |
| Sishambeh (Tuesday). | Shambah (Saturday). |
| Charshambah (Wednesday). | |

Another system of counting time has to be mentioned ; it is called the Toork Cycle, and was introduced by the Turks into Persia. It is used in government documents, books, etc. By this method time is divided into cycles of twelve solar years, each of which has a name in old Turkish, thus :—

Sichkan eel	Year of the Mouse.
Ood eel	„ Bull.
Pars	„ Leopard.
Tavishkan	„ Hare.
Zooce	„ Crocodile.
Eetan	„ Snake.
Yoont	„ Horse.
Kooce	„ Ram.
Beechee	„ Monkey.
Tekhakoo	„ Cock.
Eet	„ Dog.
Tenkooz	„ Hog.*

We have now to notice the various operations of agriculture and horticulture. In preparing the ground, a plough of very simple construction is used, drawn by oxen. Men follow it, and break up the clods with beaters, and then smooth the surface. A small harrow is often employed. Except for the culture of the melon, manure is not applied to the land ; but the latter is so fertile—especially where there is plenty of water—that two crops are gathered every year. The first of these, sown in summer, generally consists of rice, cotton, maize or lentils ; the second, sown about October, of wheat or barley. The first crop is reaped

* Binning, II. 207—10. Sheil, 240 41.

in the autumn, the second about June. Clover and lucerne are cultivated in some districts.

Before being sown, rice is soaked in water, and then covered with grass, etc., until it has sprouted. The grains are then planted in rows on well irrigated land, about the end of May. Water is essential to the proper growth of rice, and if the plants are neglected the grain is withered and worth very little.* The end of September, or beginning of October, is a good time to sow wheat and barley. At a certain stage oxen draw a board over the land, on which a man stands, and great importance is given to the process. Tobacco is grown near Shiraz and other parts, and is much esteemed. Soil impregnated with saltpetre is the best for its cultivation. It is sown early in February, and well watered. After growing for about three months, it is transplanted to other ground. The leaves are ready for gathering about the beginning of October.

In threshing, oxen are sometimes used to tread out the corn, but a machine called a *choom* is more generally employed.† Dr. Kitto describes it as a square wooden frame, containing two cylinders, placed parallel to each other, having a rotary motion. These have sharp spikes, which, when brought in contact with the corn, break the stalk and force the grain from the husk. A large heap of corn is made, round which the *choom* is driven, the grain being brought into contact with it by a man, with a sort of fork, who stands there for the purpose. He is also employed to

* Woollen rags, torn into very small pieces, form a capital manure for rice.

† This is the instrument mentioned in the following passage of Scripture: "Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument, having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff" (Isaiah xli. 15).

take away the grain which has been threshed. When this operation has been concluded the chaff is separated from the grain by being thrown up into the air.

Vines are cultivated in some parts of the country to obtain raisins and grape treacle. Wine is made at Shiraz, probably because there are a number of Armenians there, for it would be considered disgraceful for a Mohammedan to trade therein, though the Persians have little scruple in drinking it. They cannot understand how a European can be contented with a limited use of the liquor, for they think that its intoxicating effect is its great pleasure. When made in Persia, wine is fermented in large earthenware jars, but no spirit is placed in it.

In some districts a considerable amount of honey is obtained. The hives are tubular and made of wicker-work, the hole for the bees to enter being at one end. If the place where the owner lives has not enough plants and flowers, the hives are placed on the back of a mule or donkey, and transported to a more advantageous position. This occurs about May, and then they return to winter quarters about October. The Persians are humane in their bee-culture, and when they require to take the honey do not kill the bees, but simply, by the aid of a little smoke, blow them to one end of the hive, and then cut out what they need.

No fruit is cultivated with greater care than the melon. The seeds are sown about April, being dibbled, as we should call it. The ground has been previously well manured with pigeon's dung.* That bird is never eaten, but is

* Some have thought that the great value attached to the bird in Persia throws some light upon the passage which states that during the famine in

kept in large towers entirely for manuring purposes. The pigeons enter by numerous apertures in the upper part of the tower. When manure is required a door at the bottom is opened, and in this manner a considerable quantity is obtained. A melon-grower will give forty or fifty tomans for the hire of one of these pigeon-towers. The finest melons are grown in and around Ispahan.* Some of these are so delicate, that it is said that, when perfectly ripe, a horse trotting by would burst them.

Other fruits cultivated are the apple, quince, peach, apricot, orange, and pomegranate; and the vegetables in ordinary use are the gourd, cabbage, bean, and turnip. Europeans have at various times introduced the carrot, potato, and onion, but these are not esteemed by the natives. According to some writers, the potato was unknown in Persia before Sir J. Malcolm went there. This is not so, and neither does it bear the name *Alu-i Malcolm*. It is called by the Persians *seeb-i zameen*, or earth-apple. Good garden-ground, such as that in and around Ispahan, fetches, when sold, from 80 to 100 tomans a *jereeb*, equal to about a third of an English acre.

Of flowers, the commonest are the rose, marygold, chrysanthemum, hollyhock, and narcissus. Lady Sheil † says, "Roses come in about the 24th of April, and are out of season in Teheran by the middle of May. During that time they are in wonderful profusion, and are cultivated in

Samaria, "the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung" sold "for five pieces of silver" (2 Kings vi. 25), but Dr. Kitto is not of that opinion.

* In the same district *gez*, or manna, is grown. It is deposited on a shrub in the form of a white powder. Mixed with sugar it is made into cakes and eaten as a sweetmeat.

† *Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia*, p. 123.

fields as an object of trade, to make rose-water ; they are an inferior kind of cabbage rose. Persians are also fond of cultivating the tuberose, narcissus, and tulip in water ; still, all their flowers are much inferior to ours, but while they last are superabundant. I got over some fine hyacinths one year, and they attracted great admiration." *

* Dr. J. E. Pollak, in a paper read before the Zoological and Botanical Society of Vienna, in 1865, observed : " In spite of the many journeys made by renowned botanists in different parts of Persia, there exists still much doubt about plants which grow in many districts. The reason of this is, that botanists pass through these districts either when the foliage is not developed, or when the leaves have fallen. Even if travellers were fortunate enough to collect seed (and the time for doing that is very short), they very seldom germinate in Europe."

CHAPTER X.

THE ARMY: Rise of a Standing Army—Major Christie—Major Hart—Colonel Sheil—His Opinions upon the Native Soldiers—Sir H. Bethune—Feudal Tenure—Reasons for the Inefficiency of the Army—Numbers of Regiments—Administration—Pay of Troops.

WHAT may be called a standing army did not exist in Persia before the time of Shah Abbas the Great (1586—1628); and if Sir Anthony Shirley had not, during that reign, visited the country, it is probable that no military reforms would have been carried out. We must pass on two hundred years, when we find European influence again making itself felt on the constitution of the Persian army. This time it was the French, from whom we had copied the formation of our Indian army, who taught the Persians. Napoleon sent officers in the train of General Gardanne, who visited the country on a diplomatic mission in 1808. But after Sir John Malcolm's mission, English influence was paramount, and Major Christie * and Lieutenant Lindsay † taught the Persians many a valuable lesson in the art of war.

About the time of the death of Major Christie, an English officer came to Persia who was destined to occupy a most

* This gallant officer was killed at the battle of Aslandooz, in 1812.

† Afterwards created a baronet, and took the name of Bethune.

influential position. This was Major Hart, who for twenty years "worked up" the Persian army into such a state of efficiency that it was enabled, under Abbas Mirza, to commence the afterwards disastrous war with Russia, in July, 1826, in such a brilliant manner. We believe we are correct in stating that the brave major would have led the troops to battle himself, but was forbidden to do so by his Government.

It is difficult to estimate the important position Major Hart occupied during his residence in Persia. The Shah (Fetteh Ali) himself, though he had every reason to trust his brilliant son, Abbas Mirza, would not send the money to pay the troops to the Prince, but insisted on its passing through the hands of Major Hart. We have great pleasure in transcribing a sentence or two from the tribute of respect Mr. Fowler pays him in his volume:— *

" Scarcely any Englishman has resided in Persia who has obtained so much the respect and love of the people. His name was quite a passport to the traveller. In his military duties, though a strict disciplinarian, he was much beloved by the Persian soldiers. The Prince's regard for him was unbounded, and he shed tears at his decease, lamenting the loss of his Commander-in-chief as the greatest misfortune that could have happened to him. Frank, generous, and brave, he was an ornament to the English character. Trained to arms from the earliest age, he had seen twenty-eight years of uninterrupted service, and more than twenty of it in Persia. He was looking forward to retire to his native country from the toils of military life, but death suddenly interposed, and

* *Three Years in Persia*, I. 327.

both prince and people were the sincere mourners over his tomb." He died in June, 1830, and three years after, his gifted patron, Abbas Mirza, hope of Persia, friend of England, was laid in his grave.

The Indian Government, about 1833, directed its attention to the affairs of Persia. At that period Fetteh Ali was engaged in a struggle with his rebellious son. Among the officers sent to Persia was Colonel Sheil. In the appendix to his wife's work* he gives an interesting account of his labours in drilling (with the assistance of two sergeants) about 600 recruits, natives of Azerbaijan. He says:—

"With all their reputed turbulence, these young soldiers displayed a great deal of patience. Notwithstanding their short commons, they bore the incessant drilling—for our time was limited—with great submission. Outrage, excepting on one or two remarkable occasions, was rare; and they endured punishment without murmuring. All this aptitude for a soldier's life was exhibited under the peculiar and trying circumstances of all the captains and lieutenants being youths of eighteen, and recruits like the rest of the regiment. They were the Bey Zadeh, *Dhuihne wassels*, the gentlemen of the tribe, their fathers being small chiefs. Yet, with all these disadvantages, so intelligent are Persians, that the battalion was soon able to manœuvre very passably."

These troops were chiefly used to consolidate the power of the new king, Mohammed Shah. What was the result of this discipline? "With no power except that of the lash, and such authority as from personal character they (the English officers) could acquire for themselves; no

* *Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia*, pp. 317—24, and 380—85.

control over the pay or rations, which were always embezzled, or over promotion, which was always bestowed from corrupt motives,—it is not surprising they did not effect more than was done. If they could not enable the Persian troops to contend successfully with the regular troops of other nations, they at all events gave the Persian artillery and infantry the means of beating an unlimited number of Affghans and Turkomans, or irregular Persian troops.”

We shall continue our quotations from Colonel Sheil, because his remarks are the result of considerable experience, and their importance will be the more apparent when we remember how much the future of Persia will depend upon the *materiel* of its army. These extracts will show that a Persian is well adapted for a soldier. It is official incapacity and corruption, not the lack of physical qualities in the men, that has reduced the forces of Iran to their present impotent state.

Colonel Sheil had to drill about 300 Afshar recruits, “but as several old soldiers of the same tribe (the Sheghaghees), well capable of drilling, were present, and the Colonel, himself a veteran, co-operated with hearty goodwill, everything went on smoothly, and we made that rapid progress in our military acquirements which may always be expected from a Persian when he has fair play. A Persian is sometimes called the Frenchman of the east, for his intelligence, his quickness, his social qualities, and to these may be added the same aptitude for arms which distinguishes the Gallic warrior.

“Though he never attains the wonderful precision of an English soldier—I doubt if he ever could,—he has a very

satisfactory readiness in comprehending and attaining the really essential points required in a regiment of infantry. A single battalion has a perfect facility in forming line, or square, or column, even when unaided by European officers; but when it comes to be increased to a large body, and is required to move, then indeed it is chaos; they settle the difficulty by not moving at all."

In another place he observes: "The Persian soldier is active, energetic, and robust, with immense power of enduring fatigue, privation, and exposure. He is full of intelligence, and seems to have a natural aptitude for a military life. Half clothed, half fed, and not even half paid, he will make marches of twenty-four miles day after day, and when needs be will extend them to forty miles. He bears cold and heat with equal fortitude; but in the latter case, without abundance of water he is soon overcome. Unlike a sombre, apathetic Osmanli, who, brave as he is, hates the regular military service, the Persian soldier is full of life and cheerfulness. Somewhat addicted to turbulence, he nevertheless always displayed the most complete submission to his English commanders, for whom he has ever had a special veneration."

In June, 1836, Sir H. Bethune (Lindsay) arrived in Teheran, bearing a letter from the King of England to Mohammed Shah. That monarch appointed him to the command of 10,000 men, and granted him a firman, by which he was empowered to "teach the Persians the art of war." It was at this time that Sir Henry, at considerable cost, took miners and mining apparatus to develop the mineral resources of the country.* We need hardly say he was

* *Fowler's Three Years in Persia*, II. 218.

unsuccessful, not from the mineral poverty of Persia, but on account of the apathy of the people.

At the present time, according to Colonel Sheil,* the Persian army is instructed by Italian officers, refugees from Naples and Venice, and by a few Hungarians and Germans.

It should be remarked that previous to the time of Fetteh Ali Shah (1798—1834), the army was recruited by a sort of feudal tenure. That monarch found that the tribes were too powerful of themselves, and therefore deprived them of the right of performing military service in return for the use of their pasture lands. These were horsemen, and good soldiers in their way, but as their term of service was only for a limited time, their practice of insisting upon returning to their homes when that time had expired, was in war found so inconvenient that more regular forces were a necessity. It is interesting to remember that there were few permanent troops in England before the Civil Wars, the first five regiments of British infantry being established between the years 1633 and 1680.

Formed of men with such a *physique* as we have mentioned, how is it that the Persian army is in its present state of inefficiency? The answer is not far to seek—it is the peculation which is rampant here, as in every department of the State, combined with the utter worthlessness of the native officers. Another Teki Khan is wanted in Persia! The soldier's pay, generally several years in arrear, is meagre enough at best; but by the time it reaches him it has been materially reduced.

* He wrote in 1856, but Mr. Mounsey (p. 141) confirms his statements.

Badly fed and clothed, and lodged in wretched barracks, what wonder is it that the men are glad to get permission to work as mechanics, or in the fields? In fact, but for some such arrangement, the army could not be maintained at all.*

Then look at the officers. Each of these, from the highest to the lowest, probably owes his position not to any fitness for the situation, but because he has been able to pay enough bribes to satisfy the cupidity of those who have patronage to bestow. He cares nothing for his men, who look on him with contempt. So great, probably, is his incompetency, that foreign officers are obliged to be employed to drill his soldiers. What a grievous thing it seems that men who can act as Persian soldiers did at the commencement of that disastrous war with Russia, which grew out of the undefined nature of the treaty of Gulistan, should be so treated. Like the French, however, they are more suited for a brilliant onset than for sustaining a charge, and anything like defeat terribly disheartens them. The misfortunes of Abbas Mirza had so lowered him in the estimation of his troops that they almost refused to serve him.

In order to confirm our statements respecting the condition of the Persian army, which have been chiefly derived from works written about twenty years ago, we turn to a more recent volume, that of Mr. Mounsey. He says (p. 142): "The army at present consists of ninety regiments of the line, each regiment being 800 strong; of three squad-

* Sometimes, when it is found inconvenient to pay a regiment, the soldiers receive six months' leave of absence, or even more. When they return, can it be wondered at that they have forgotten a good deal of their drill?

rons of regular cavalry, and 200 camel artillerymen, forming the Shah's body-guard; 5,000 artillerymen; and 30,000 irregular cavalry, which are only called out in case of emergency. The infantry is armed chiefly with English percussion muskets, and one-half of it is always on furlough.

"There are barracks—if four bare walls and a roof can be so termed—in the capital and principal towns, but no hospitals; nor is there any code of punishments, these matters being left entirely to the discretion of the commanding officer. The bastinado generally, on the soles of the feet, abscission of ears, nose, and hands, strangulation, and decapitation are the usual penalties inflicted. There is no fixed age for entrance into the army, and boys of fifteen are often seen in the ranks by the side of grey beards. The men are enlisted for life, but can leave the service on producing a substitute. . . .

"As to army administration, no such thing is known, and contracts for clothing and commissariat are given to the highest bidder. Altogether, the lot of the Persian soldier is a very hard one: he is fleeced in every direction. His clothing reaches him in scanty proportions, he is mulcted of his pay, and is obliged to seek his livelihood when off duty as best he can. Thus in the capital all the butchery is done by soldiers; and they are continually to be seen where the hardest work is going on, staggering through the bazaars under huge loads, digging water courses, or building walls. But in spite of all this, I have generally found them willing and obedient, sober and enduring, and capable of gratitude—that rarest of feelings in the East—for the smallest kindness; if pro-

perly cared for they would, no doubt, make excellent troops.”*

Sir John Malcolm says that the private soldier in the troops raised by Abbas Mirza received ten tomans, equal to about £10 of our money. In consequence of the depreciation in the value of the toman, the seven tomans, which according to Colonel Sheil and Mr. Binning the average private now receives, would not amount to more than £3 10s. per annum. To this a ration of about three pounds of bread is added.

The nominal strength of the Persian army is 100,000 men (infantry), but it really consists of about half that number. Each regiment of 1000 men (commanded by a lieutenant-colonel, with 500 tomans) consists of 10 companies (having a captain receiving 60 tomans), and over two regiments is placed a colonel, who enjoys 1000 tomans, the highest rank in the army. The inhabitants of the villages dread the march of a Persian regiment, and they have good cause to do so, for the soldiers are compelled, in order to exist, to lay hands on everything eatable within their reach.

* A French officer, who knew Persian well, thus described the troops. “ Les soldats n'ont ni discipline, ni respect, ni obéissance, pour leurs chefs ; ces derniers n'ont aucun sentiment de leurs droits, de leur devoir, de leur dignité, et sont incapables de guider ou de réprimer convenablement leurs subordonnés.”

CHAPTER XI.

EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE: Colleges at Shiraz—Subjects Taught—College at Ispahan—Schools—Mirzas—Flowery Style—Education of Princes of the Blood—Persian Knowledge respecting Europe—Arab Story—Sir J. Malcolm on Reform in Oriental Countries—Language—Arabic and Parsi—Grammar—Dialects.

SHIRAZ is the Oxford or Cambridge of Persia, for it contains about ten colleges. The chief of these has its buildings surrounding an open court or quadrangle, and lectures are delivered to the students "in residence" in a large hall. Nearly all the colleges are maintained by endowments, chiefly left for the purpose, by deceased monarchs, nobles, and wealthy merchants. The students, therefore, are not required to pay for rooms or education, but are, in most of the establishments, obliged to provide their food. From what we have said in our chapter on the arts and sciences of the Persians, our readers will not be surprised to learn that the teaching provided in these collegiate establishments is of a very elementary kind.

In fact, a "finished" student will have learned little more in his college career than a fair acquaintance with the Persian and Arabic languages, and a smattering of Shiah theology, logic, mathematics, and the ability to write a letter interspersed with flowery epithets and poetical quotations. If a young man shows a strong tendency

towards science, and is a favourite with mudarris, or moollah, he may get enough knowledge of chemistry or astronomy to induce him to continue the study of the one for alchemy, the other for astrology, and then it is probable that his future life will be wasted in a search for the philosopher's stone or casting nativities.

There is a large college—not for the number of its students, for they seldom exceed thirty, but the magnitude of the building—at Ispahan. It was rebuilt and endowed by Ali's son, Hussein, the Persian favourite, and is called by his name. We have also to mention the government college at Teheran, in which the pupils are supported by the Shah, and where the system of education is more varied and liberal than that pursued at Shiraz or Ispahan, French and English, for example, being taught. Mr. Watson says that of late years the Shah has sent youths to France to be instructed in medicine, as well as in general education; but when they return to their native country, those who have not been so favoured endeavour to prevent their getting employment.

In Persian colleges and schools great pains are taken with the manners of the boys and young men. It has often been remarked by travellers with what propriety and grace they behave. As a general rule boys of high rank are not sent to college, but are instructed by tutors at home.

In turning to ordinary schools, it appears that little is taught besides reading and writing. A sheet of tin supplies the place of paper or slate in the acquisition of the latter, but, as it is easily washed, well answers its purpose. Here is a description by Mr. Mounsey* of a school in

* *Journey, etc.*, p. 161.

Teheran:—"A Persian school is a very funny affair. The room is generally open to the street. Looking in, one sees a lot of boys squatted on their heels on the floor round a moollah, all rocking themselves to and fro, and all repeating aloud the tasks they have to commit to memory. The result is a little babel of sounds, a jumble, to those who understand the language, of verses from the Koran, drinking and love songs from Hafiz, and heroic lines from Ferdousi. These are the books most studied; and a Persian's education is pretty well complete when he can quote freely from them, and talk a little Arabic."

There is an Armenian school at Julfa, which is attended by about one hundred scholars, and is supported by the interest of a sum left for the purpose, some years ago, by an Armenian merchant. In Persian villages the moollah, or priest, usually takes pupils, and is paid according to the means of the parents. This is usually a payment in kind, generally in wheat or barley, with an extra present when the boy can read the Koran, which is considered in a village a great accomplishment.

Persons who can read and write well generally adopt the title *mirza*, which is prefixed to their names. These men are in great request, and form a distinct class, who transact a great portion of the business of the country. Though the nobles pretend to encourage literature, the mirzas, who get their living by their literary accomplishments, are rather treated with contempt by them, much in the same way as the feudal barons of the Middle Ages despised the clerks.

An inflated flowery style is considered the perfection of composition. As an example of this we cannot do better than quote the preamble to the treaty concluded by Sir

John Malcolm in 1800. Besides its diction he points out that it is remarkable for "the art by which it saves the dignity of the King of Persia from the appearance of treating with any one below the rank of a monarch," and in limiting the sovereignty of the King of England to that of the seas.

"After the voice is raised to the praise and glory of the God of the world, and the brain is perfumed with the scent of the saints and prophets, to whom be health and glory, whose rare perfections are perpetually chanted by birds of melodious notes (angels), furnished with two, three, and four pairs of wings; and to the Highest, seated in the heavens, for whom good has been predestinated, and the perfume mixed with musk, which scenteth the celestial mansions of those that sing hymns in the ethereal sphere, and to the light of the flame of the Most High, which gives radiant splendour to the collected view of those who dwell in the heavenly regions. . . . To illustrate the allusions that it has been proper to make, and explain these metaphors, worthy of exposition at this happy period of auspicious aspect, a treaty has been concluded between the high in dignity, the exalted in station, attended by fortune, of great and splendid power, the greatest among the high viziers in whom confidence is placed, the faithful of the powerful government, the adorned with greatness, power, glory, splendour, and fortune, Haji Ibrahim Khan; on being granted leave, and vested with authority from the porte of the high king, whose court is like that of Solomon; the asylum of the world; the sign of the power of God; the jewel in the ring of kings; the ornament in the cheek of eternal empire; the grace of the beauty of sovereignty and

royalty; the king of the universe, like Caherman; the mansion of mercy and justice; the phoenix of good fortune; the eminence of never-fading prosperity; the king powerful as Alexander, who has no equal among the princes exalted to majesty by the heavens on this globe; a shade from the shade of the Most High; a Khoosroo, whose saddle is the moon, and whose stirrup is the new moon; a prince of great rank before whom the sun is concealed. . . . And the high in dignity; the great and mighty in power; the ornament of those acquainted with manners——; delegated from the sublime quarter of the high in power, seated on a throne; the asylum of the world; the chief jewel in the crown of royalty and sovereignty; the anchor of the vessel of victory and fortune; the ship on the sea of glory and empire; the blazing sun in the sky of greatness and glory; lord of the countries of England and India; may God strengthen his territories, and establish his glory and command upon the seas in the manner explained in these credentials! which are sealed with the seal of the most powerful and most glorious, possessing fortune, the origin of rank, splendour, and nobility; the ornament of the world; the accomplisher of the works of mankind; the Governor-General of India!"* Such a document would have driven Aga Mohammed Khan (1794—97) nearly wild, for that monarch detested the prevailing redundant style, and strove to restrain it.

Princes of the blood are carefully trained to observe court etiquette and the forms of religion. At eight years of age it is probable they will read Persian and Arabic fairly, at which period the elegant productions of Hafiz,

* *Sketches of Persia*, I. 154—157.

Saadi, etc., are placed before them, and also the ordinary elementary works on grammar and mathematics, followed by those on logic and philosophy. It is to be feared that the great portion of these young princes only gain enough superficial knowledge to pass muster, but occupants of the throne of Persia have not been wanting who were distinguished by an unaffected love of literature. Lady Sheil tells us that women of the higher classes frequently acquire a knowledge of the choice poetical works of the great poets, and the ladies of the royal house of Kajar conduct their own correspondence without the aid of a mirza.

From their natural quickness of perception and observation, the Persians make up for their lack of instructive books and general deficiencies of education. As Sir John Malcolm told the members of his suite, "These Persians have no knowledge beyond their own country, they understand no language but their own and Arabic; and though all the better classes read, the books to which they have access afford them little, if any, information, except of Asia. Europe, in fact, is only known by name, and by general and confused accounts of the fame of its nations and their comparative greatness. They are, however, a very keen and observing people, and full of curiosity. In the absence of books, they will peruse us, and, from what they hear and see, form their opinion of our country. Let us take care, therefore, that nothing is found in the page but what is found in England, and, believe me, that with such a people more depends upon personal impressions than treaties."

It may be now interesting to glance briefly at the state of

Persian knowledge respecting Europe, included under the general name of Feringhistan.* When Mr. Ussher † visited the Shahzadeh, or Prince-Governor of Shiraz, the Shah's uncle, he asked him whether it was really true, as he had been told, that England was an island. The French, he had been informed, discovered that the world was round, and that people walking with their heads down and their feet up were on the other side of it; but of course he was too wise to believe that. The Shahzadeh had heard of the visit of the Emperor of the French to England, and could not understand how he could have been so foolish as to trust himself to a nation which had been at war with his uncle. He could not comprehend how the empress could have travelled in England, without any restraint as a private person. The English love of travel puzzled him greatly, for he thought it marvellous that people who enjoyed so many luxuries should leave their country for amusement.

Mr. Binning conversed with Jehangeer Mirza, a grandson of Fetteh Ali Shah. This royal personage thought that the English and French and Russians were all under one king, and seemed astonished when informed that Britain was governed by a female sovereign. Another traveller, Mr. Mounsey, thinks "the prevalence of such ideas is not surprising, when the geographical and intellectual isolation of Persia is considered. The number of Europeans who visit it is exceedingly small, and their intercourse with the natives of the most limited nature. Few of its inhabitants have ever been west of Constantinople and Nishi-Novgorod, or east of Bombay, and the accounts

* For origin of this term, see p. 222, *note*.

† *Journey, etc.*, p. 522.

which these few bring back with them, of what they have seen, are always toned down so as to flatter the national vanity." *

This reminds us of the story, related by Sir John Malcolm, respecting an Arab woman, an inhabitant of Bushire, who accompanied a gentleman named Beaman to England, and remained there four years. "When she returned, all gathered round her to gratify their curiosity about England. 'What did you find there?' 'Is it a fine country?' 'Are the people rich—are they happy?' She answered, 'The country is like a garden; the people are rich, have fine clothes, horses, houses, and carriages, and are said to be very wise and happy.' Her audience were filled with envy of the English, and a gloom spread over them, which showed discontent at their own condition. They were departing with this sentiment, when the woman happened to say, 'England certainly wants one thing.' 'What is that?' said the Arabs eagerly. 'There is not a single date-tree in the whole country!' 'Are you sure?' was the general exclamation. 'Positive,' said the old nurse. 'I looked for nothing else all the time I was there, but I looked in vain.' This information produced an instantaneous change of feeling among the Arabs: it was pity, not envy, that now filled their hearts; and they went away wondering how men could live in a country where there were no date-trees!" †

This induced Sir J. Malcolm to doubt the soundness

* *Journey, etc.*, 271, 272. Mr. Mounsey concludes: "Probably a Cornish miner or a Cumberland ploughman knows as much of Central Asia as an enlightened Persian does of anything beyond the frontiers of his own country."

† *Sketches of Persia*, I. 76, 77.

of many admirable speeches, and some able pamphlets he had read, regarding the rapid diffusion of knowledge. He "began to think it was not quite honest, even admitting it was wise, to take away what men possessed of content and happiness, until you could give them an equal or greater amount of the same articles." And has not Gibbon, with his usual sagacity, observed: "Chardin says that European travellers have diffused among the Persians some ideas of the freedom and mildness of our governments: *they have done them a very ill office.*" We should, however, in order to do justice to Sir. J. Malcolm, quote further from his remarks. "I do not mean," he says, "to condemn national efforts to spread knowledge, nor to deny that such endeavours may, in due season, produce happy effects; but such results will be retarded, not accelerated, by all attempts at rapid and premature changes. . . . Revolutions of such a nature as we desire will work themselves into form when time changes men's sentiments, and ripens a nation for them; but we too often, in the foolish pride of our knowledge, rush towards the end, with little or no consideration about the means.

"In our precocious plan, we cast the blame from that on which it ought to rest upon those we desire to reform. Because men continue, like their ancestors, to live under an arbitrary monarch, and have not the precise qualities upon which we value ourselves, we hasten to the conclusion that they are slaves and barbarians whom the force of habit and prejudice alone saves from being as miserable as they are degraded. Viewing them in this light, we waste a pity upon them, which they neither value

nor understand, nor has it, if we analyze its grounds, any just foundation. Though unacquainted with political freedom, though superficial in science, and unlearned in Greek and Latin, they are not without defences against injustice or despotism, and the very condition of their society gives them, on all points affecting themselves, their families, or friends, an intuitive quickness and clearness of perception, which appears wonderful to men, rendered dull, as it were, by civilization. Neither are such nations deficient in those arts which are subservient to the subsistence and promote the enjoyments of man; and they are, perhaps, more alive than we improved beings to those passions whence so much of our happiness and misery flow."*

It is a difficult matter to make Persians understand the inventions now being introduced into their country, particularly the telegraph. Mr. Mounsey relates an amusing anecdote of the method taken to explain the latter to a local governor, who thought the wires were hollow, and messages blown through them. The officer said, "Imagine a dog whose tail is here at Teheran, and

* There is a great deal of truth in Mr. Binning's remark (i. 207): "After all there is quite as much stupid prejudice and ignorance to be found among many in civilized Britain. How many are there in our favoured isle who, having lived entirely at home, and rarely, if ever, moved beyond the limits of their native town and place, are fully as illiberal and incorrect in their ideas of other people and things, and quite as puffed up with inflated notions of their own worth and importance, as these untutored Persians! And these have not the excuse which the latter possess; for in an enlightened and well-informed nation ample means are afforded them of disabusing themselves in respect to such particulars; but narrow minds will naturally cling so tenaciously to their darling opinions and prejudices, that no amount of evidence to the contrary can suffice to persuade them of their fallacy."

his muzzle in London; tread on his tail here, and he will bark there."

We now turn to the language of Persia—the French of the East—which Dr. Claudius Buchanan estimates as "next in importance to the Arabic and Chinese, in regard to the extent of territory through which it is spoken, it being generally understood from Calcutta to Damascus." Previous to the accession of the Sassanian dynasty (A.D. 226) there were two languages, or, more correctly speaking, idioms or dialects, in Persia. These were the Pehlevi and the Farsi, or Parsi,* the one uncouth, the other elegant. The Sassanian monarchs, hating the former, at first discouraged its use, and in the middle of the fourth century absolutely prohibited it.

Less than three hundred years after came the Mohammedan conquest, and a large infusion of Arabic into the Parsi† was the philological result, and that combination is modern Persian. Parsi was essentially a courtly language, and Arabic words then introduced gained in harmony‡ what they lost in expression. A descendant of Tamerlane, or Timour (1336—1405), imported the language into India. It became the court language of the country, and until a comparatively recent period§ was

* The letters *p* and *f* in Persian are used immaterially. As a rule the former indicates the old language.

† Leibnitz has observed that the resemblance between the Parsi and the Teutonic languages is so great, that a cultivated German would have no difficulty in understanding whole Persian verses.

‡ Mohammed is said to have remarked that "the language of Persia should be spoken in Paradise, owing to its extreme softness."

§ Indian Mohammedans still write in this language, for the flowery style to which it is especially adapted is with them very popular. Mr. Binning says Indians learn Persian from books, most of them written many centuries ago, and have no skill or practice in the modern dialect.

the tongue in which trials in the civil and criminal courts were conducted.

Returning to the language of Persia, we quote the following respecting it from an able article in the *Saturday Review**:—"The framework of the language remained, in all its simple solidity. The grammar, with its verbs and nouns, or, as Oriental lexicographers put it, with its words for *actions* and for *names*, modified neither conjugation nor declension; and the familiar and common expressions for animals, natural objects, and things in daily use, held their ground. But an enormous addition was made to the power of expression possessed by educated and literary men, and with the change of religion, even the colloquial use, of many Arabic words and phrases, was gradually adopted. The result is that a Persian writer, poet, historian, philosopher, or divine, can at will vary his style, and express his meaning by recourse to profuse and seemingly inexhaustible stores. The Persian and Arabic Dictionary of Richardson now before us is a bulky volume of more than seventeen hundred pages, with two columns to each page. Taking the number of words in each column on the average to be twenty, we have a total of nearly seventy thousand, for the combined forces of these two great tongues. An eminent Orientalist has calculated the total at eighty thousand.

"English students need not, however, imagine that to become a fair Persian scholar, familiarity with one quarter, or even one tenth of these, is imperative. If we are correctly informed, that fifteen hundred words supply

* June 21, 1873, p. 807.

the materials for a long evening's debate in the House of Commons, it will be soon understood that a foreigner with a good ear and an aptitude for languages may by the mastery of a few thousand words—say, from five to ten thousand—appreciate Saadi, dictate a letter in Persian, and discourse fluently with merchants and officials at Tabreez and Teheran. The main difficulties are encountered at the outset. An Englishman may be inclined to think other nations barbarians because they put words on paper from the right hand to the left, because they only express some three vowels, and because they have ruled that there is a certain sound inherent in each consonant which need not be otherwise written. We write *sun*, *bud*, and *milk*. A Persian contents himself with *sn*, *bd*, and *mlk*, which to him signify, respectively, 'a year,' the adjective 'bad,' and the legal term 'property.'"

The grammar of the Persian language is very simple; but Persians do not use a book to learn their language, but acquire it entirely by ear. The alphabet is the same as the Arabic, with the exception of four extra letters. Books are generally written in a style called *Taalik*, but also in that entitled *Nishki*, an upright hand used by the Arabs. A very free running, or short, hand is used for correspondence, etc., and this is the despair of Europeans acquiring the language.* It is called *shikastah*. The difficulty of

* "A Persian letter," says Mr. Binning, "is folded up close like a thread-paper or match to light a candle, and in the middle is inserted a narrow strip of coloured adhesive paper called the *ser-chasban*, the end of which is brought round the folded paper, wetted with the tip of the tongue, and thus secured. The writer then smears the surface of his seal ring with ink (which is thicker and blacker than ours) and stamps it on the place where the fastening is." In India it would be considered an insult to send any one a letter secured in this manner.

this may be imagined by the following quotation from Lady Sheil: "One of my modes of study was to listen to the Persian meerzas or secretaries reading letters, but I never saw an instance of their reading an epistle at once without hesitation, and still less of their understanding it at the first perusal."

Nevertheless she says, "Fortunately Persian, up to a certain extent, is an exceedingly easy language, more so even than Italian. In the pronunciation there is no difficulty, and for my limited topics of conversation the idiom was not so remote from that of the languages of Europe as to make its acquisition a painful study. But that there is no good unmixed with evil is true of Persian as of all other things. There is no such thing as 'reading made easy.' The character is abominable and almost invincible. Enough to say that there are neither capitals nor pauses of any kind, nor divisions of sentences, paragraphs, chapters, books, or volumes."

A rough form of Turkish, called *Toorkee*, is much used in Persia, particularly in the north-western portions of the country. This is in fact the ancient form of modern Turkish. "It is," says Lady Sheil, "the prevailing language to within a hundred miles of Teheran, as far as Kasveen, where it is as constantly employed as Persian. At Court, Persian is used on state occasions; but at other times the royal family, amounting to two or three thousand princes and princesses, delight in the tongue which their forefathers brought from the walls of China, or even from Pekin; for there is a tradition that the tribe of Kajar, like the valiant English Varangians in Constantinople, formed the body-guard of the sovereigns of the Celestial Empire.

The central and southern parts of Persia are full of Toork tribes, who have preserved their language. In the Caspian provinces of Ghilan and Mazanderan dialects of Persian are the prevailing tongues. The mountaineers belonging to the genuine Persian tribes of Kurds and Leks still preserve their native idioms, and with the above seem to be the only inhabitants of Persia among whom the Toork invaders have failed to plant their language."

It is of the greatest importance for travellers intending to visit Persia to make themselves acquainted with the language,* for they will find no one who has any knowledge of any European tongue. It adds immensely to the pleasure of any tour when a traveller can converse with the people whose country he visits, but in Persia it is almost a necessity.

* For this purpose the following works may be used: *Grammar of the Persian Language, with Reading Lessons and Vocabulary*, by Duncan Forbes, L.L.D. (Allen & Co.); *Persian Grammar*, by Sir W. Jones, London, 1771, other editions 1804, 1809, 1823, and 1828, the last revised by Professor Lee; Richardson's *Persian and Arabic Dictionary*; *Persian Miscellanies*; *An Essay to facilitate the Reading of Persian MSS.*, with engraved Specimens, Philological Observations, and Notes critical and historical, London, 1795, ten plates; and *Persian Distichs, from Various Authors*, in which the beauties of the language are exhibited in a small compass and may be easily remembered, by Stephen Weston, B.D., London, 1814, privately printed.

CHAPTER XII.

TRAVELLING: Various Routes to Persia—Travelling in the Caucasus—Climate—Commencement of Spring—Summer Quarters—Healthiness of Ispahan—Travellers' Outfit—Dress—Cost of Mules and Servants—Expenses of Living and Travelling—Roads—Caravansaries—Travelling Post—Caravans—Hospitality—Persian Treatment of Foreigners—Souvenirs.

THE first thing, of course, an intending traveller in Persia has to decide, is the route he will take on entering the country. He may proceed to Bushire, on the Persian Gulf, and pass northwards to Shiraz, Ispahan, Teheran, etc., or take one of the three northern routes; viz., viâ Constantinople, Black Sea, Trebisonde, Erzroum, and Tabreez; Constantinople, Poti, Tiflis, and Tabreez, *i.e.*, the Caucasus route; or by St. Petersburg, Moscow, Nishni-Novgorod, Astrakan, and Caspian Sea, to Enzelli. Of the three latter routes, the first has the Black Sea voyage, generally a bad passage, and a journey through Turkish Armenia,* as its disagreeable features; and the second, the Black Sea and Russian travelling in the Caucasus. Mr. Mounsey, who went to Persia this way,

* Lady Sheil, who returned from Persia this way, says, "This was the most disagreeable part of my Eastern experience. The annoyance arose from the dreadful accommodation at night, which no words, at least none that I can command, could describe!" (*Glimpses*, p. 290).

gives in his interesting work a vivid description of the discomforts of the latter.

Describing the "telega," a posting vehicle, he says : "In the Caucasus it may be described as an oblong wooden box of the roughest sort, placed, without springs, upon four wheels, and capable of holding one traveller and his traps most uncomfortably. Even on the best of roads, the jolting of such a machine would effectually dissipate all idea of comfort; on the very bad ones of the Caucasus it is simply beyond description. Bedded in straw, huddled in furs and wrappers, exposed to driving rains, pelting sleet, and spattering mud, all control of one's actions ceases from the moment the yamtchik, or driver (whose retention of his seat on a narrow board in front has always appeared a miracle to me), takes possession of the reins. All one's energies are thenceforward devoted to preventing one's self being jerked out of the waggon, or crushed by one's portmanteau breaking away from its fittings. *Ventre-à-terre* is the pace maintained, if possible, throughout the stage, irrespective of ascent or descent, ruts, holes, road, or no road."*

Such being the second northern route, we turn to the third, by Russia, the Volga, and Caspian, to Enzelli. From London, Enzelli may be reached in about twenty-three days, that is, by rail to St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Nishni-Novgorod, and by steamboat down the Volga and Caspian Sea† to the Persian port of Enzelli.

* *Journey through the Caucasus and Persia*, pp. 28, 29. Mr. Mounsey went in the winter, which of course rendered the travelling more uncomfortable.

† The steamer touches at several interesting places on this sea, the chief being Baku, where the sacred fire of the Guebres still burns in the ancient fire temple. This "holy flame" is fed by naphtha, in the form of gas, which comes out of the ground.

Teheran* may be reached in about a week, viâ Resht and Kasvin; so that it takes about a month to reach the capital of Persia from the metropolis of England.

We will now consider the climate of Persia, and, consequently, the best time to visit it, for on this, of course, depends the outfit a traveller will require. Persia is delightful in spring and autumn, and should therefore be visited at those seasons of the year. Speaking of Shiraz, Mr. Mounsey observes: "The climate during spring and autumn is delicious. May is perhaps the finest month. The whole plain is then fresh and green; the gardens are filled with roses and nightingales; cherries ripen; and Persians indulge in quantities of green almonds, of which, as of all unripe fruit, they are excessively fond." Owing to the extent of the country, and the slowness of travelling, the difficulty has been to see enough of Persia in either spring or autumn, so as to avoid the intense heat of the summer, or the severe cold of the winter. The railway now in progress will obviate this.†

Spring may be considered to commence with the new year's festival (*Now Rooz*), March 22. Lady Sheil says: "Now begins the glorious weather of Persia, lasting until the middle of May, when it becomes a great deal too hot. In April the nightingales commence their songs, and the rose trees begin to open their blossoms." Mr. Binning

* From Teheran the traveller may proceed southwards, and leave the country from Bushire.

† The first sod of this line was turned September 25, 1873, at Resht, in presence of the foreign consuls and residents. An idea of its present condition may be formed by perusing the footnote on page 123. It is interesting to remember that the opening of the first public railway in England—the Stockton and Darlington—took place Sept. 27, 1825.

observes: "After this, journeys are made at night, for although the nights are still cold, the weather is getting hot during the day. The sudden approach and rapid advance of the spring are very striking. Before the snow is well off the ground the trees burst into bloom and flowers start forth from the soil. At Now Rooz the snow was lying in patches on the hills and in the shaded valleys, while the fruit trees in the gardens were budding beautifully, and green plants and flowers spring up on the plains on every side."

In the latter part of May every one who can do so leaves Teheran for summer quarters, generally at the foot of the Elburz mountains.* The royal camp is generally established in a valley called Sheristanek, on the north side of those mountains. Mr. Mounsey there visited his Majesty, and his description† of the scene is so interesting that we will quote it:—

"The Shah usually passes five or six months of the year under canvas. Like all Persians he dislikes the restraints of town life, and as soon as summer commences departs to the hills, where he can enjoy freedom and indulge his passion for hunting and shooting. His camp is no temporary bivouac, but a summer residence, as comfortable and luxurious as any of his palaces. He is generally accompanied by forty ladies of the harem, and his own and

* "At this season," says the *Times* correspondent, under date July 10, 1873, "the Persian capital is deserted by every one who has a country habitation, and can get away to it, and little wonder, with the thermometer standing all day at 97° indoors, and no possibility of moving out between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., without risk of a fever; who would stay there who could help it?"

† *Journey through the Caucasus and Persia*, p. 275.

their marquees, which are scarlet, form the centre of the encampments. At a respectful distance are grouped the white tents of ministers, courtiers, and guards, the abode of the chief executioner, distinguished by the display of several felleks, and a plentiful supply of sticks, being conspicuous amongst them, and around these soldiers and servants to the number of three or four thousand bivouac, and horses, mules, etc., are tethered."

Isfahan is a good place at which to spend the summer, for it is very healthy. Writing from this place, July 1st, Mr. Binning says: "The hottest time is about two hours after noon; but I have not seen the thermometer higher than 87° in my room. In the morning, at sunrise, it is generally at 70°. The weather will be warmer shortly, as the latter part of this month is the hottest time of the year in Persia. The nights are always comparatively cool, and in this respect the climate of the country possesses a great advantage over an Indian summer, where the night is sometimes almost as warm and oppressive as the day. Like every one else, I sleep now on the roof of my house. The nights are clear and bright; the air very dry; little dew falls, and that so pure as to be innocuous."* The Persian autumn is said to be even more delightful than the spring, and often lasts until the middle of December.

People get back to Teheran the latter part of September or the beginning of October. Of winter, or late autumn, Mr. Binning, writing December 1st, remarks: "The climate is now very pleasant. There is frost at night and thin ice on the pools in the morning, which melts before noon. At midday the sun is warm, and the

* Binning, *Two Years in Persia*, II. 321.

temperature like a spring day in England. At six o'clock in the morning the thermometer stands at 30° out of doors. At noon it rises to 52° in the shade, and 94° exposed to the full heat of the sun. At eight o'clock at night it has fallen to 362. No snow has yet fallen on the plains or surrounding mountains. The air is remarkably pure and dry, like that of Upper Egypt.* Winter is over about the middle of February. In travelling in the snow, a shade or veil of some kind should be worn, to prevent inflammation of the eyes. Perhaps snow is more trying to the traveller than intense heat.

Having selected route and time of year, the traveller's next consideration will be his outfit. When Mr. Mounsey went to Persia, in 1866, he asked many friends to tell him what he should require, but could get little information. *Experientia docet*, and we are glad that for the guidance of future travellers he inserted a list of the articles of his "kit" in his preface. This we transcribe:—

"Fowling-piece, revolver, and ammunition; light bedstead (the lightest I know are made in Russia, and occupy little more space than an ordinary gun case); sheets, blankets, etc., and waterproof covering; portable India-rubber bath, japanned iron washhand-basin, plates and cups; knives (a large one for the pocket, with cork-screw, is most useful), forks and spoons; English saddle, fitted with holsters, and saddle bags, and bridle; portable medicine chest; a small supply of brandy; preserved meats and soups. The traveller should be prepared for the extremes of heat and cold, and accordingly provide himself with a pith helmet; strong riding boots and breeches; veils and

* Binning, *Two Years in Persia*, I. 244—255.

spectacles for the protection of the eyes; several linen suits for summer; fur coat, felt boots (reaching to the knee), and a plentiful outfit of woollen and flannel clothing for winter."

It will, however, be seen from what we have said above, that there will be no occasion for the ordinary traveller to remain in Persia during the winter, and therefore some items in the above inventory may be omitted. We may observe also, that even if the railway should be completed from Enzelli or Resht to Bushire, as proposed, the great width of the country, roughly speaking 850 miles, will necessitate much riding. In order to judge of the resources, cultivation, etc., of this interesting country, it will not be sufficient to confine one's self to the roads even, for these are best studied in the plains and beautiful parts of the country which are concealed in sequestered valleys.

Returning to outfit, we observe that Mr. Binning recommends a mackintosh air bed, which can be laid on the damp ground without danger, and having two chintz quilts instead of blankets and sheets. A folding camp-stool is extremely handy, and a piece of carpet (eight feet by five), with loops for suspension,* to keep out cold and wind from the cell of a caravansary, and secure privacy. We have not observed it in any works of Persian travel, but we should think if three or four semi-circular hoops† could be

* Some large nails to suspend this will be necessary. A large leathern vessel, called a *matara*, is very important, as water is often extremely bad. Insect powder, to be placed about a room or caravansary cell at night, is useful. Tea, coffee, sugar, etc., should be placed in the saddle-bags. Peasants will supply the travellers with bread, eggs, fowls, and fruit.

† When complete it would appear like the *herse* or frame which was sometimes placed over mediæval tombs to protect them, as at the Beauchamp Chapel, Warwick.

placed over the bed, and musquito netting thrown over, and well-secured all round, such an arrangement would not take up much room when travelling, and would keep off flies and other insects which are often annoying. Formerly travellers adopted the Persian dress, though this is now unnecessary.*

A tweed shooting-jacket or a frock-coat may be worn, the latter is the most liked by the Persians. Europeans who occupy an official position in Persia are obliged to go about with a number of useless attendants, which they describe as a great nuisance. But the importance of a man there is estimated by his servants; this does not, however, apply so much to the ordinary traveller. One good servant is sufficient, for if horses or mules are hired, the contractor or his deputy accompanies them. The *peshkedmet*, or body servant, has from twenty-five shillings to two pounds a month. The latter sum, we observe, Mr. Brittlebank paid his servant, who agreed to accompany him from Bushire to Teheran, and further if required. Lady Sheil says that Persian servants in a house are absolutely worthless, but on a journey are full of attention and activity, and never seem to suffer from fatigue. On a

* Sir R. Kerr Porter advises travellers "never to adopt the entire costume of any nation but his own, for by so doing he deprives himself of the safe conduct bestowed from respect to his country; and he loses all claim to the rights of hospitality, by assuming a character that he is not. There is nothing so dangerous to a man in a foreign country as to affect mystery and awaken suspicion." He also suggests the impropriety of a traveller trusting his life to the protection of one man alone. "In case of an assault from numbers, a single auxiliary would be no defence, and sometimes that single arm, in a moment of temptation and opportunity, might be found too strong for an unguarded master."—*Travels in Georgia, Persia, etc.*, I. 271.

journey master and servants go heavily armed, more, however, for show than necessity. One of Mr. Binning's attendants, who always carried a gun, told him that he had never fired one in his life!

Mules are the baggage animals in Persia, and valuable beasts they are. From their strength and surefootedness they are indispensable to carry heavy burdens over mountain passes, and other dangerous ways. Fifty tomans is sometimes given for a good baggage mule, whereas a camel may be bought for half the money. It is estimated that two thousand five hundred mules are employed between Bushire and Shiraz only. The miscellaneous articles forming a traveller's kit, are placed in bags made of a coarse kind of cloth, and a good mule will carry a load of three hundredweight on hilly roads, and more on level ground. They go at the rate of about four miles an hour. Ladies travel in a large box, called a *takhteravan*, about seven feet by four, with a door on each side and windows at the top. Poles project from either end, which are fastened to a mule before and behind.

We may here fittingly mention the expenses of living and travelling. These are decidedly cheap. Mr. Binning lived for a month at Julfa, the suburb of Ispahan, for £8, including house-rent, wages of a head-servant, groom, and cook, and the feed of a horse. The journey from Teheran to Tabreez, being twenty days on the road, with four people and four horses, Mr. Fowler accomplished for about £10, and from Tabreez to Erzurum, about the same distance, for a like amount. For three mules, from Bushire to Shiraz,*

* This is about one hundred and sixty-four miles. Distances in Persia are calculated by *farsakhs*, or $3\frac{1}{2}$ English miles.

Mr. Brittlebank paid £5 (120 kerans or khrans), and £6 10s. for horses from Ispahan to Teheran. He had to feed the animals himself, at a cost of from twelve to seventeen shillings a day. His daily personal expenses were about ten shillings.

Roads—or rather the lack of them—have next to be noticed. This is a serious drawback to Persia, the so-called roads being mere tracks, often dangerous. Sir J. Malcolm gave Fetteh Ali Shah a curricule, and suggested that it would be advisable to construct roads so that wheel carriages might be generally used. “The wisdom which prompted this advice was lauded to the skies. Roads were admitted to be a great and obvious improvement, at once ornamental and profitable to Persia. Plans for making and keeping them in repair were required and furnished. The royal mandate, the Elchee was told, should be issued immediately, and he was much pleased at the thought of having given rise to a measure so good.”*

When the Minister of Finance said to Sir John, “But you know Persia,” the ambassador knew that no roads would be made. As we should say in England, the report was furnished, docketed, and pigeon-holed. The present Shah has constructed some capital roads near Teheran, leading from the Doulet Gate past the palace of Kasr-Kajar, and Sultanetabad to Shemran at the foot of the Elburz mountains.†

But the traveller may exclaim with Falstaff, “Shall I not take mine ease in mine inn?” ‡ or remember Shenstone’s lines:—

* *Sketches of Persia*, II. 168.

† *Times*, September 4th, 1873.

‡ *King Henry IV.*, Act III., Sc. 3.

“ Whoe'er has travelled life's dull round,
Where'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
The warmest welcome at an inn.”*

If he expects comfort in a Persian caravansary† he will be disappointed. Imagine a large courtyard, surrounded by a series of vaulted cells or recesses all open to the weather, these frequently being over the stables. A stone platform in the centre serves for a resting-place for merchandise and a seat in cool weather. In the best caravansaries there is a resident attendant to clean the cells and disburse firewood, but others have no such keeper, and many are very ruinous. No toll is demanded of travellers for the accommodation, but a small fee is expected by the attendant.

But meagre and comfortless as these caravansaries often are, the traveller hails their appearance at the end of a long journey, and, with the assistance of his servants, contrives to make himself tolerably comfortable. Some of the best of these inns in Persia were built by Abbas the Great, whose bridges and aqueducts likewise frequently appear. He ruled the country with an iron hand, but no sovereign since his time has done so much for Iran. Other caravansaries have been built by wealthy merchants and others as a religious act.

When a person wishes to make a journey with great rapidity he should send on his baggage some time before, and travel post or *chaporee*. Post houses are established at intervals along the most frequented routes and these

* Written by him on the window of an inn.

† Strictly a resting-place for caravans (Persian *Karwan*, caravan, and *sarai*, inn).

chapar-khonehs are built on the same plan as the caravan-saries. Sixty miles a day is considered a good day's journey by this means, but couriers and others sometimes travel one hundred miles a day. An Englishman told Mr. Brittlebank that whilst travelling in the Caucasus he had to ride four hundred miles in four days, but the exertion was followed by a violent fever. Couriers learn to sleep in the saddle, and so perform long journeys in an incredibly short space of time. The Government allows about £100 to each post-station, but as is the case with everything in Persia, a considerable portion finds its way into official pockets at head quarters, and the amount which reaches the *chapar-khoneh* is inadequate to its proper maintenance.

If time is of no object to the traveller, a caravan journey is more preferable. Mr. Mounsey describes one of these made from Teheran to Ispahan with two friends. They had twenty mules, which were each hired at the rate of 1s. 10d. a day, which carried the necessary *impedimenta*. He says, "Notwithstanding the monotony of most Persian scenery, this species of travelling has a great charm; in fact, with agreeable companions, good health, and fine weather, I can imagine nothing pleasanter. The traveller has perfect freedom, he can go where he likes, and halt when he likes. With a well-equipped caravan he is as independent as a man can be. There is always sufficient incident to drive away *ennui*, and the certainty continually brought home to him, that his safety depends solely on himself, is productive of quite enough healthy excitement."

In reading travellers' accounts of their treatment by Persians, and the hardships, or otherwise, of travel in the

country, we must make allowance for the statements of ambassadors and other officials, who, from their position and the state in which they live and travel, often describe things as *couleur de rose*, frequently to the disappointment of the subsequent traveller, who proceeds in the ordinary manner. See, for example, with what a train Sir John Malcolm went through the country: "Nine splendidly dressed jelloodars, or grooms, under the direction of a *meer-akhoor*, or master-of-the-horse, led nine beautiful horses, richly caparisoned, with saddles and bridles finely ornamented with gold and silver. Next came eight *shâtirs*, or running footmen, dressed in tunics of yellow cloth trimmed with silver, and then the Elchee and suite, followed by a large escort of cavalry, with kettle-drums and trumpets. On the flanks of this state-line of march were all kinds of *meerzas*, or secretaries, and attendants." * At every halting-place the populace were ordered to do him honour, on pain of the Shah's displeasure. Can we wonder, therefore, that many of his statements appear to be highly coloured.

If the traveller thinks that he will be overwhelmed with offers of Persian hospitality, he will soon find himself mistaken. Their religious principles naturally make them dislike those they consider infidels, and if their curiosity sometimes induces them to invite the "Feringhee" to their houses, and ask a number of questions—often most trivial and ridiculous—interspersed with unmeaning compliments, he must be upon his guard and appraise them at their true, not apparent, value. Mr. Mounsey says: "The hospitality known to us as Eastern

* *Sketches of Persia*, I. 203.

and so agreeable to the traveller, is that afforded by Europeans established in the East. In their houses he is sure of the warmest welcome, can come in and go out as he listeth, stay as long as he likes, and live as if he were in his own abode. There being no hotels in the country, he quarters himself, as a matter of course, on any European he may find, and the latter would look upon it as a slight were he to do otherwise. This arrangement is agreeable to both host and guest, for whilst the latter feels himself at home, the former cannot but find pleasure in seeing a new face, and exchanging ideas in a western tongue." *

Should the stranger be invited to a Persian house,† he should find out the amount of consideration to which he is entitled, for his host will be almost certain to attempt to lower him in some point of etiquette. Mr. Binning "found that the proper way to secure respect is to adopt a firm and decided—almost a bullying—manner towards the company on entering a house, as if resolved to exact as much attention as I can justly claim, and as much more as I can get them to concede to me." This may seem strange advice to give a visitor to the house of a member of one of the most—outwardly—polite nations in the world, but the statement is borne out by the experience of other travellers.

There is great probability, however, that the recent visit of the Shah to Europe will have a beneficial effect in this respect. His enthusiastic reception—particularly in Eng-

* *Journey through the Caucasus and Persia*, 90, 91.

† On such an occasion the kaleon, or pipe, is always offered. When passed round the company a visitor should remove the head and blow the smoke from stem and bowl before giving it to another.

land—has given the greatest satisfaction throughout the country, and this feeling, combined with the opening up of the country by railways and good roads, will doubtless place the Feringhee traveller in a better position. It should be mentioned that the lower classes appear to be always willing to give information to travellers, and a great part of the interest of Mr. Binning's book consists in the way in which he made use of their statements. A traveller should have a well-stored mind,* power of observation, and plenty of curiosity, and with these qualifications, his travels will interest himself, and, if he publish them, be of value to others.

If the visitor desires, as he probably will, to bring away a *souvenir* or two from the land of the Shah,† he should enquire for the *dellal*, or curiosity dealer, who will furnish him with copper vases and cofferes exquisitely engraved, enamelled kaleons, papier-maché articles, talc drawings, or textile fabrics. We should advise travellers not to send anything home, but take the things themselves, for parcels of such articles are often plundered *en route*.

* "He who would bring home the wealth of the Indies must carry the wealth of the Indies with him."—*Spanish Proverb*.

† The Shiraz tobacco is very fine. Mr. Brittlebank bought 180 lbs. and sent it home. At Southampton it was seized by the Custom-house authorities, on the ground that sugar and salt were mixed with it, and, so treated, its importation was prohibited.

CHAPTER XIII.

SPORT : Fauna of Persia—Hunting the Antelope—The Hubara a good Quarry—Malcolm's Description of Hawking—The Derraj, or Black Partridge—English Foxhounds—Rams.

BEFORE mentioning the Persian passion for sport, we cannot do better than quote the following valuable remarks on the fauna of the country from a paper read by Mr. W. T. Blanford, F.G.S., at the recent meeting of the British Association at Bradford.*

“Being situated on the limits of the region occupied by the Palæarctic Fauna, Persia presents in different parts of the country several peculiarities in consequence of the admixture of the Palæarctic desert and Indian faunæ, which is found on different portions of its surface. Throughout the greater portion of the territory, over nearly the whole plateau, the fauna is of the desert type, characterized by the prevalence of such forms as gazelles, wild asses, *Gerbillus*, *Buteo ferox*, the *Griffon vulture*, *Buocanetes githagineus*, *Pterocles*, *Eremias*, *Agama Psammophis*, *Eryx*, etc. With these, however, Palæarctic types are largely mixed, such as the serotine; but the European wild cat, the wolf, badger, otter, the Syrian bear, *Mus sylvaticus*, and the wild

* *Times*, September 26, 1873; *Athenæum*, September 27, 1873.

hog, with numerous birds, *e.g.*, the lämmergeyer, goshawk, black kite, scops owl, *Lanius minor*, a true nightingale, thrush, blackbird, golden oriole, wren, greater tit, raven, hooded crow, and magpie (all of the European species). In the north, along the Caspian, in the forests of Mazanderan and Ghilan, the fauna is purely Palæarctic, and differs but little from that of Southern Europe, the principal additions being the tiger, *Cervus maral*, the common pheasant, and a species of halys.

“To the west and south-west, on the forests which cover the south-west slopes of the hills towards Mesopotamia, the fauna is also mainly European, but still it appears to differ somewhat from that near the Caspian. A few peculiar forms occur, such as a tree squirrel, a new woodpecker, allied to *P. medius* of Europe, two new tits, etc. In the south, in Fars, part of Kerman, and Beloochistan, the countries on the shores of the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean, the Palæarctic fauna almost disappears, but the desert types still occur mixed with some Indian forms, such as two bats, *Sciurus palmarum*, *Gazella Bennetti*, *Poliornis teesa*, *Athene Brama*, *Pratincola caprata*, *Calotes versicolor*, etc. Some of these forms extend as far west as the head of the Persian Gulf, near Busrah.

“With these are several species peculiar to Beloochistan and Scinde, and several animals previously only known from the north-eastern part of Africa. The whole of Persia may thus be divided into three principal regions: 1st. The forest countries of Ghilan and Mazanderan on the Caspian, and the wooded slopes east of Mesopotamia, and extending to the neighbourhood of Shiraz, the fauna of which is chiefly European; 2nd. The plateau of

Persia occupied by a mixture of Palearctic and desert forms, and Southern Persia, which is inhabited chiefly by desert and Indian types."

The wild ass is rather rare, but is much esteemed for the excellent sport it affords. In hunting the antelope both hawks and greyhounds* are employed. The hawks are very useful for annoying the animal and retarding its pace until the dogs have come up with it. As the Persians are splendid horsemen they much enjoy a gallop after the deer at full speed over a plain, on which spot the hunt usually takes place.

Sometimes, when a herd of antelope is seen, greyhounds are used in the sport without hawks, but it usually happens that three or four dogs are killed before the deer is secured. Sir John Malcolm says that Aga Mohammed Khan was extremely fond of this sport. In some parts antelopes are caught in the winter, when, being pressed for food, they come near the villages in search of it. Dogs are slipped at them, and, as they cannot run in the snow except with great difficulty, they are generally easily taken.

In hawking proper, the hubara, a kind of bustard, is a good quarry. Sir John Malcolm describes† the sport on one occasion: "As we rode along in an extended line, the men who carried the cherkhs (hawks) every now and then unhooded and held them up that they might look over the plain. The first hubara we found afforded us

* "The Persian greyhound is a fine animal, not quite so swift of foot as the English, but possessing far greater strength and power of endurance." (Binning, II. 74.)

† *Sketches of Persia*, I. 55—57.

a proof of the astonishing quickness of sight of one of the hawks; he fluttered to be loose, and the man who held him gave a whoop as he threw him off his hand, and set off at full speed. We all did the same. At first we only saw our hawk skimming over the plain, but soon perceived, at a distance of more than a mile, the beautiful speckled hubara, with his head erect and wings outspread, running forward to meet his adversary.

"The cherkh made several unsuccessful pounces, which were either evaded or repelled by the beak or wings of the hubara, which at last found an opportunity of rising, when a bhyree (an Indian hawk, and better adapted for the sport than the cherkh) was instantly flown, and the whole party were again at full gallop. We had a flight of more than a mile, when the hubara alighted and was killed by another cherkh who attacked him on the ground. This bird weighed ten pounds. We killed several others, but were not always successful, having seen our hawks twice completely beaten during the two days we followed this fine sport."

It is much to be regretted that the attempts * which have been made in England to revive the favourite mediæval pastime have not been successful. In Persia hares are frequently caught in this manner, the falconer taking care to encase the thighs of the bird in such a way that it may not be torn asunder by the frantic attempts of the hare to escape. The hawk is drawn along the ground by the hare until it is able to catch hold of some grass or other object,

* See Knox's *Game Birds and Wild Fowl*, and *Illustrated London News*, December 2, 1871. The former describes Colonel Bonham's endeavour on a large scale in Scotland; the latter, that at Hendon, near London.

and so gain a firm hold. If a falcon has seized a hare and dogs come up, it will attack them rather than give up its prey.

The derraj, or black partridge (so called from the colour of its breast), is often hunted by horsemen on a plain. The bird is flushed, and when it alights is driven on again until it falls exhausted, much in the same manner as some pursuers get birds in England when the snow is on the ground.* Persian sportsmen seldom waste powder and shot upon small game, but reserve them for large animals. Snipe abound in marshy districts, and afford excellent sport.

When Sir John Malcolm went to Persia he carried with him a few couple of English foxhounds, and many runs took place, grèatly to the astonishment of the natives. They were subsequently presented to the Prince Abbas Mirza. Europeans do not appear to keep a pack of hounds now, and the "hunting" described by Mr. Mounsey would be more correctly denominated coursing. In this sport greyhounds are used, assisted even by hawks, dogs or birds being slipped or flown at the game as opportunity offers. Anglers will find many of the streams yield capital trout and other fish.

Some Persians keep rams for fighting purposes, and terrible are the encounters between these animals. As

* The derraj is often called *bagri-kara* (black-breasted), and much resembles the *burr-tectur*, or rock grouse of India. Mr. Mounsey says that these birds are so numerous on the banks of the Tigris and the neighbourhood of Bagdad, that he has heard of eighty brace being shot in a day. We should mention that, as in the Low Countries, the stork is held in high estimation as a sacred bird. In the holy city of Koom its nest appears on many a minaret and dome.

with the cockfights which so recently disgraced England, men high in rank find pleasure in witnessing the conflict. We can hardly point the finger of scorn at the Persians, for in the eighteenth century cockfighting was the most popular national sport in England, and *ten* years have hardly elapsed since a British nobleman was fined by magistrates for indulging in this inhuman sport.

CHAPTER XIV.

WOMEN : Laws of Marriage and Divorce—Amount of Dower—Extravagance on the Wedding Day—Marriage of the Shah's Daughter—The Mnyer's Palace—Cost of the Festivities, etc—Marriage of the Heir Apparent—Harems not Prisons—Liberty of Women—Love of Cruelty—Want of Popular Education—Wandering Tribes—Dress of the Shah's Mother.

IN order to understand the general condition of women in Persia, it is necessary first to consider the laws of marriage and divorce. A Mohammedan is not allowed to have more than four wives—most have only, one—but the number of his concubines is only limited by the extent of his purse. In marriage the parents betroth a young female, and until she stands in the presence of the moollah for the nuptial ceremony, she has probably not seen her destined husband.* Men of rank have other "wives," who, though not on an equality with the four, still take a precedence over other dwellers in the harem. In their case a contract for *ninety* years is entered, and their children enjoy equal rank with those of the four.

A long deliberation usually takes place between the parents respecting the amount of the dower. This is

* At least this was the case in former times, but recently the young couple have been permitted to see each other, not openly, but "under the rose" (Binning, II. 402).

a most important proceeding, for a marriage is not considered valid unless there is a dower, and upon this sum the bride lives in the event of her husband's death. Though children are occasionally betrothed in infancy, a Persian girl is generally fourteen or fifteen years of age when she is married, and her husband not less than sixteen. The Mohammedan law affords great facilities for divorce,* but notwithstanding this, the husband is considered so disgraced by it, that few Persians have the courage to institute proceedings against their wives.

Reckless extravagance on his wedding day is the general rule with a Persian. Many a man has had to pinch the rest of his life to pay loans contracted so that he might make a good show on that day. For the purpose of giving an idea of the pomp of these celebrations, we shall quote two interesting descriptions of them; the one the marriage of the son of the Muyer-el-Moolk, or Minister of Finance, with one of the Shah's daughters, in January, 1867, the other that of the Heir-apparent and his cousin, in October of the same year.

The Muyer's office is the most lucrative in Persia, and the minister had taken advantage of every means of acquiring wealth, so that he had amassed a large fortune. The Shah thought the Muyer's son would be a good match for one of his daughters; and the festivities connected with the marriage lasted seven days. On the first of these the young couple met, it was alleged, for the first time, and the contract was signed; on the seventh the bride was

* See the chapter on "Betrothal, Divorce, and a Persian Lady's Day," in M. de Gobineau's *Journey in Persia*, quoted in Figuier's *Human Race*, 1872, p. 196.

conducted to her husband's house. Mr. Mounsey was invited by the Muyer to visit his palace on one of these days. He thus describes his visit in his usual graphic manner :*—

“It was the finest palace in the town, surrounded by large courts and gardens, which on the night of our visit we found brilliantly illuminated with Bengal lanterns, and filled with guests. Traversing these, we mounted a handsome staircase, and were welcomed at the top by our host, who had put on his bravest apparel, and successfully concealed the signs of his advanced age by an extra application of indigo dye to his beard. He wore a robe of the richest cashmere, the Shah's portrait set in diamonds on his breast, and a belt studded with brilliants and rubies, and clasped with a buckle formed of one big emerald. After receiving our congratulations, he conducted us through several handsome rooms, some of which were ablaze with lights reflected from numberless squares of mirror glass encrusted in the walls, whilst in others there reigned merely a rosy semi-obscurity.

“We then entered a large saloon ornamented from top to bottom with the most elaborate stucco mouldings in high relief, of trees, flowers, fruits, and birds: colour alone was wanting to make it appear like a bower. Its windows looked on to a garden where were collected all the mummers, rope-dancers, athletes, musicians, and singers of the town, and for an hour or more we had to look at and listen to their performances, eat sweetmeats, and smoke gold and jewel-headed pipes.

“At last dinner was announced, a meal half European

* *Journey through the Caucasus and Persia, 287—90.*

half Persian. The West was represented by chairs and a table crowded with a motley array of crystal, bronze, and porcelain vases filled with fruits and flowers, by a complete service of plate, glass, and earthenware, and a *menu* containing twenty-five dishes; the East by large bowls of sherbet and mountains of rice, by a constant din of tomtoms and guitars, by the wild discordant ditties of a troop of singers squatted on the carpets, and by dancing-boys in female costume, who kept turning continually round the table, and accompanying their measured movements with castanets.

“Amongst the guests were several of the greatest men in Persia. They too had donned their richest robes and finest jewels, and brought their prettiest pages with them—handsome youths, many of them, beautifully dressed. The bridegroom was not present at dinner, but when his health was proposed the Moyer sent to request his attendance. He entered the room escorted by a train of servants bearing lighted candellabra, made a low bow, and then stood still for a while with downcast looks, without uttering a word, like a man afflicted with all the woes of humanity or about to mount the scaffold; having thus shown his good breeding, according to the Eastern notion, he departed as he had come.

“After dinner—which lasted many hours, and would have been insupportably tedious to us had we not, by the advice of our host, caused our servants to bring a supply of wine from our own cellars, and was dreadfully fatiguing to the Persians, who hate sitting on chairs—there was a grand display of fireworks, in the manufacture of which the natives are great adepts; we were then ushered into a

dimly lighted hall, thickly carpeted and cushioned, where more music and fresh bebies of boy-dancers helped to while away the hours until midnight. A few nights later we witnessed the last ceremony of a Persian marriage, the bringing home of the bride."

Mr. Mounsey says this marriage is said to have cost the Muyer £160,000; or £80,000 for the bride's dowry and cost of the festivities, £60,000 as a present to the Shah, and £20,000 to his mother. We have now to quote the description * of the marriage of the heir-apparent:—

"The ceremony was conducted with great pomp. The cavalcade in which the bride left her home was preceded by about 100 horses, mules, and camels, carrying servants, carpets, tents, and her outfit; then followed many led horses covered with rich housings; and next came the carriage containing the princess, who was concealed behind wooden blinds. The vehicle was drawn by six horses. It was followed by mules carrying palanquins closed with curtains, and containing the women of the bride's suite. The procession was closed by a large number of officers and dignitaries on beautifully caparisoned horses; and it was accompanied by violin, trumpet, and tamborine players. The princess was thirty-three days upon her journey; and having arrived at the city of her intended husband, she was provisionally lodged in a palace there. Public rejoicings preceded the marriage; and on the day fixed for the ceremony, three hours after sunset, the princess was conducted in a litter with torches to her lord's palace, where the marital rites took place." †

* *The Wedding Day in all Ages and Countries.* By E. J. Wood, I. 95, 96.

† If there are no children by the union, the wife or wives have one-fourth of his property; if children, an eighth.

Those who think that the harems are like prisons, across whose thresholds the "unhappy" inmates never pass,—and the opinion appears to be widely spread,—will be surprised to read the following passage from the preface to a curious work edited by Mr. J. Atkinson :—*

"Kings and rulers indulge in a plurality of wives and mistresses; these undoubtedly are immured within high walls, and are kept during life like slaves. But the great and powerful, who alone have such establishments, are not in the proportion of one to ten thousand of the population of the country. If a person of inferior rank marries a woman of respectable connections, she becomes mistress of his family; and should he have only one house, he cannot place another on an equality without a certainty of involving himself in endless trouble and vexation, if not disgrace. The dower usually settled on such a lady, added to other privileges, and an unlimited authority over her children and servants, gives her much importance, and she is supported by her relations in the assertion of every right which custom has invested her.

"With regard to liberty, such a lady can always go to the public bath; and not only that, but she visits for one or two days, as she chooses, at the house of her father, brother, sister, or son. She not only goes to all these places unattended, but her husband's following her would be deemed an unpardonable intrusion. Then she has visitors at home, friends, musicians, dancers; and the

* *Customs and Manners of the Women of Persia, and their Domestic Superstitions.* Translated from the original Persian by James Atkinson, Esq. Oriental Translation Fund, 1832. The work is supposed to be a number of grave maxims established by a conclave of sage matrons, but is really a *jeu d'esprit*.

husband cannot enter the lady's part of the house without giving notice. The moment his foot passes the threshold everything reminds him that he is no longer lord and master: children, servants, and slaves look alone to the lady. In short, she is paramount; when she is in good humour everything goes on well, and when in bad, nothing goes right." *

We have only to turn to Lady Sheil's book to find these statements amply confirmed. There is no work on Persia which affords so much information as this on the life of the *anderoon*. She confesses (p. 212) that her residence in the country has thoroughly dissipated her English ideas of the seclusion and servitude in which Persian women are supposed to live. "Bondage, to a certain extent, there may be, but seclusion has no existence. Daily experience strengthens an opinion I had formed of the extent of the freedom in which they spend their lives, particularly whenever I pass the door of the physician to the mission. Jealousy, at all events, does not seem to disturb Persian life in the *anderoon*, or to form a part of the character of Persians. The doctor's door and house are crowded with women of all ages and of all ranks, from princesses downwards, who come to him to recount their ailments. It seems that applications for succour are often founded on most frivolous motives—gossip, rather than physic, being frequently their object."

The custom of going out when and where a lady pleases cannot be conducive to morality, for as Mr. Binning remarks, "shrouded in the disguise of her *chader* and

* We regret to say that this passage appears to be taken without acknowledgment, from Sir J. Malcolm's *Sketches of Persia*, II. 39—41.

roobundeh, she may pass her husband unrecognized, and go where she likes without much fear of detection." The same author ascribes to the ladies a most unwomanly quality. "One of the most disgusting features in their character is their love of cruelty—odious enough in a man, and infinitely more so in the gentler sex. I have been assured, that when an execution or other brutal and bloody spectacle takes place, the women crowd to witness it, taking a savage delight in seeing an unfortunate individual put to death or mutilated. The want of popular education and the faulty way in which they are brought up must account for this absence of feeling." *

When there is a rumour of contagious disorders in a city, the ladies are delighted, for they see a chance of retiring to the delightful open-air existence. True to the nomadic instincts of their ancestors, they love to gain the high mountain lands, and revel in a tent life.

Among the wandering tribes, the men have usually but one wife, and are constant. The women are therefore generally happy, and there is little of that intrigue—attended often, it is to be feared, by dreadful crimes—which is so characteristic of the city anderoon. Speaking of the women of these tribes, Sir J. Malcolm says, "The females who dwell in tents wear no veils. They welcome strangers, are very hospitable, and their manner, though confident, is by no means immodest." † A man of high rank in one of

* Mr. Scott Waring observes: "The Persian women, like the Indian, are totally devoid of delicacy; their language is often gross and disgusting, nor do they feel less hesitation in expressing themselves before men than they would before their female associates. Their terms of abuse or reproach are indelicate to the utmost degree." (*Tour*, p. 62.)

† *Sketches of Persia*, II. 21.

these tribes said to Sir John, "The influence of females amongst us Eelyats is very great, and if we did not treat them with respect, matters would not long be right."

The qualities most esteemed in a Persian woman are a tall figure, round face, black hair, arched eyebrows. In fact, the following translation from one of the poems of Anacreon, the Greek lyric poet,—whose compositions much resemble those of Hafiz,—will exactly apply to them :—

"First draw her easy flowing hair,
As soft and black as she is fair ;
And if your art can rise so high,
Let breathing odours round her fly.
Beneath the shade of flowing jet,
The ivory forehead smoothly set ;
With care the sable brows extend,
And in two arches nicely bend :
That fair space which lies between
The meeting shade may scarce be seen.
The eye must be uncommon fire,
Sparkle, languish, and desire." *

Persian ladies laugh at Europeans for wearing gowns, which they call "trousers with one leg." Wide trousers are a distinctive feature of their own attire, and give them a most ungainly aspect. We must again place Lady Sheil's volume under contribution for a description of the dress of the Shah's mother, which she carefully noted on her visit to that distinguished personage, whose importance in the kingdom we have before pointed out :—

"She wore a pair of trousers made of gold brocade. These Persian trousers are always very wide, each leg being, when the means of the wearer allow it, wider than the skirt of a gown, so that they have the effect of

* Anacreon, 28 (*Guardian*).

an exceedingly ample petticoat; and as crinolines are unknown, the *élégantes* wear ten or eleven pairs of trousers, one over the other, in order to make up for the want of the above important invention. But to return to the Shah's mother. Her trousers were edged with a border of pearls embroidered on braid; she had a thin blue crêpe chemisette, also trimmed with pearls; this chemisette hung down a little below the waist, nearly meeting the top of the trousers, which are fastened by a running string. As there was nothing under the thin gauze, the result of course was more display than is usual in Europe.

"A small jacket of velvet was over the chemisette, reaching to the waist, but not made close in front, and on the head a small shawl, pinned under the chin. On the shawl were fastened strings of large pearls and diamond sprigs; her arms were covered with handsome bracelets, and her neck with a variety of costly necklaces. Her hair was in bands, and hung down under the shawl in a multitude of small plaits. She wore no shoes, her feet being covered with fine cashmere stockings. The palms of her hands and the tips of her fingers were dyed red, with a herb called henna,* and the edges of the inner part of

* Moore, in his *Lalla Rookh*, says :—

"While some bring leaves of henna, to imbue
The fingers' ends with a bright roseate hue,
So bright that in the mirror's depth they seem
Like tips of coral branches in the stream;
And others mix the kohl's jetty dye
To give that long dark languish to the eye,
Which makes the maids, whom kings are proud to cull
From fair Circassia's vales, so beautiful."

the eyelids were coloured with antimony.* All the Kajars have naturally large arched eyebrows, but, not satisfied with this, the women enlarge them by doubling their real size with great streaks of antimony. Her cheeks were well rouged, as is the invariable custom among Persian women of all classes."† In fact, like their contemporaries in Europe, the Persian ladies

"With curious arts dim charms revive,
And triumph in the bloom of fifty-five."

* Analogous to this is the use of kohl mentioned in the quotation from Moore. Ezekiel evidently alludes to the custom in the passage, "Thou didst wash thyself, *paintest thine eyes*, and deckest thyself with ornaments." The Egyptians, according to Rimmel's *Book of Perfumes* (135), thus prepare the kohl: "They remove the outside of a lemon, fill it up with plumbago and burnt copper, and place it on the fire until it becomes carbonized; then they pound it in a mortar with coral, sandal-wood, pearls, ambergris, the wing of a bat, and part of the body of a chameleon, the whole having been previously burnt to a cinder and moistened with rose-water while hot."

† Mr. Binning (II. 91) thinks that the white sheet and faceband which Armenian women now wear must formerly have been the universal dress of all Persian females. He founds his belief from figures in illuminated MSS. in his possession. We have, however, a *kalmān*, or pen-case, in our collection, of the time of Ismail Shah (1502—23), the first Seffavean monarch, and though this is decorated with portraits of many ladies, not one of them has the Armenian head-gear.

CHAPTER XV.

CROWN JEWELS: Ancient Persian Treasury—Nadir Shah in India—Orloff Diamond—"Mogul" Gem—*Ocean of Light*—*Koh-i-noor*—Nadir's Trick—*Crown of the Moon*—Pitt or Regent Diamond—Sir Harford Jones—The Treasure-Chamber and its Contents—The Turquoise—Large Emeralds—The Shah's Talismans.

THE author would never be forgiven, by the ladies at least, did he not allude to the Shah's jewels, which, in his recent tour, rendered him especially the cynosure of every eye. But before doing so it may not be out of place to quote the following description of the ancient Persian treasury preserved by Athenæus (XII. 514), copied from the biography of Alexander by Chares of Mitylene:—"Close to the king's bed there was overhead a chamber in which were always kept 5000 talents (300,000 lbs. in weight) of coined gold: this was called the king's pillow. At his feet was another chamber, somewhat smaller, wherein were always kept 3000 talents of silver coin: this was called the king's footstool. In the bedchamber there was a vine of gold (the gift of Pythius?) set with gems, spreading above the couch. This vine, according to Amyntas, had bunches of grapes made out of the most precious gems."* For the sake of comparison, Mr. King

* *Natural History of Precious Stones and Precious Metals*, by C. W. King, p. 80.

notes that the Roman treasury at its fullest contained 15,000 lbs. weight of silver, twice that amount in silver ingots, and 300,000 in coined silver.

But the crown jewels of Persia are not the production of that country, nor have they been purchased from time to time, out of its surplus revenues. We must go back to 1739, when Nadir Shah—who had risen to his proud position from having been a petty robber in Khorassan—returned from Delhi, laden with the spoils of India. We have already referred in the historical portion of this work to his love for precious stones, and mentioned that he bore in his train the famous peacock throne of the kings of Delhi.

There is every reason to believe that the Orloff diamond set in the Russian sceptre, weighing $194\frac{1}{4}$ carats, decorated that regal seat. A story is often related about this diamond, that it formed one of the eyes of the great idol of Sheringham, and was stolen by a French deserter who entered the service of that image on purpose to purloin it; but this is incredible. If it be asked how could the gem have left Persia, a reply worthy of credence can at once be given. We know the confusion that ensued after the assassination of Nadir Shah, and there is every probability that the Armenian Shaffias purchased it from an Affghan, formerly one of Nadir's generals, and that after passing through several hands it was bought in 1772 by Prince Orloff for £90,000, and presented to Catherine II. of Russia.

We thus pointedly refer to the gem because Mr. King, a great authority in such matters, in his *Natural History of Precious Stones*, devotes some pages to the identification

of the "Mogul" diamond and that seen by Tavernier in 1665,* among the treasures of Aurunzeb, though he admits, in a subsequent note, that in outline the Orloff much resembles the drawing Tavernier made of the Mogul. One thing is certain, his statement that the gem "is supposed still to exist amongst the regalia of the Persian crown, and to be there designated as the Deryai Noor, or *Ocean of Light*," is incorrect.

The Deryai Noor, the gem of the whole Persian collection, is a stone of 186 carats; and whereas Tavernier expressly says the Mogul gem was circular and of fair water, the Persian stone is oblong in shape (size about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, an inch broad, and three-eighths of an inch thick) and has so little "fire," that Mr. Ussher † says "it is perfectly plain, not being cut in angles, as is usual with diamonds . . . and seemed exactly like a bit of very thick plate glass;" and Mr. Eastwick, ‡ who has written the best account of the Shah's jewels with which we are acquainted, admits that he "was not prodigiously impressed with this jewel. It is a monstrous diamond, but not very brilliant."

Persians love to think that this stone, with our Koh-i-noor, decorated the sword of Afrasiab, who lived three

* Professor Maskelyne has advanced a theory that the diamond seen by Tavernier was the Koh-i-noor itself, but we agree with Mr. King in thinking this cannot for one moment be accepted. The Professor, to get over the great difference in the weights of the two stones, is obliged to say that Tavernier in estimating the stone confounded the *pearl-rati* with the *jeweller's-rati*. Some time before Tavernier saw this gem it had been re-cut, but formed before that operation a stone of $787\frac{1}{4}$ carats.

† *Journey from London to Persepolis*, 635.

‡ *Journal of a Diplomat's Three Years' Residence in Persia*, 1864, II. 115—121.

thousand years before our era. They add that Timour (or Tamerlane) carried them to India, where they remained until Nadir Shah's memorable expedition. It may be interesting to note that the Koh-i-noor came into the possession of Nadir by the exercise of a very clever trick. He did not take the diamond by force, as he had the other treasures, but when going through the ceremony of re-establishing the Tartar monarch on the throne of Delhi, he remembered the ancient Oriental custom of exchanging turbans *in token of amity*.

The fallen monarch could not refuse this pledge of friendship, though, to his own chagrin and the dismay of the Court, the famous *Mountain of Light* passed with it to the conqueror. Its subsequent history to the time when, at the capture of Lahore, it fell into the hands of the British army, is too well known to need recapitulation here.* By re-cutting in 1862 (at a cost of £8000) it was reduced from 186 carats to $106\frac{1}{16}$.†

Another fine diamond in the Persian collection is the *Crown of the Moon*, 146 carats. According to Sir John Malcolm, this gem and the above-mentioned *Sea of Light*

* *Diamonds*, by H. Emanuel, 79, 80; *King's Precious Stones*, 70—76; *Diamonds*, by W. Pole, F.G.S., *Macmillan's Magazine*, Jan. 1861.

† For the sake of comparison, we give the weights of celebrated diamonds. The Sultan of Turkey has a diamond weighing 147 carats; the Emperor of Austria has a brilliant of $139\frac{1}{2}$ carats; Mr. Coster's *Star of the South*, 125 carats; the Piggott gem, $82\frac{1}{2}$ carats, possessor not known; the Nassak, the property of the Marquis of Westminster, before re-cutting 89 carats, now 78 carats; and the Sancy, which James II. sold to Louis XIV. for £25,000, $53\frac{1}{2}$ carats, now in the Russian treasury. The South African diamond fields have yielded some fine stones. Chief among them is the *Star of South Africa*, which when found, in May, 1869, weighed $83\frac{1}{2}$ carats, now $46\frac{1}{2}$ carats. The *Star of Beaufort*, from the same "diggings," weighs 88 carats uncut.

are set in a pair of bracelets valued at a million sterling. This does not agree with the account of Mr. Mounsey, who saw the Shah in his palace in 1867. He says (p. 165), "In his hat he wore an aigrette, the distinctive emblem of royalty, of diamonds and rubies; his tunic, cut square and descending to his knees, was a blaze of brilliants and pearls; and in his belt, from which hung a jewelled sword and scabbard, glittered the *Darya Noor*, or *Sea of Light*, a sister diamond of our Koh-i-noor." Yet another larger diamond is mentioned by Mr. Eastwick, the *Taj-i-Huma*, or Diadem of the Phoenix. It seemed to him as big as the top of a man's thumb.

Mr. Eastwick's statement, that the Pitt or Regent diamond was sent by George IV. to Fetteh Ali Shah, and appears in a ring among the Persian jewels, puzzled us exceedingly. Following its generally received history, we knew that this diamond was acquired for about £20,400 by Governor Pitt, of Fort St. George, Madras, great grandfather of the celebrated William Pitt. Statements were circulated at the time that he had obtained it by unfair means, and even Pope in his *Man of Ross* inserted an allusion to the celebrated transaction—

"Asleep and naked, as an Indian lay,
An honest factor stole a gem away."

It actually weighed 410 carats, but Pitt reduced it by cutting to a gem of 136 $\frac{3}{4}$ carats. Afraid of being robbed of his jewel, Pitt was glad to dispose of it to the Duke of Orleans, Regent of France, for £135,000. The diamond disappeared in the robbery of the Garde Meuble, in 1792, but was subsequently recovered. Mr. King does not give its history beyond this period; and in our dilemma,

fortunately remembering that mine of useful information *Notes and Queries*, we turned to its volumes, and soon found what we required.*

The editor, in reply to a correspondent who could not understand Mr. Eastwick's remark, quotes (April 30, 1864) a passage from Madame de Barrera's *Gems and Jewels* (1860, p. 278): "The Regent or Pitt diamond, pawned by Napoleon I., stolen by a band of robbers, made by Tallyrand a bait to subdue Prussia, passed unscathed through half-a-dozen revolutions, *still pertains to France*. The first emperor wore it mounted in the hilt of his state sword; it is now (1860) set in the imperial diadem." The editor, with great probability, suggests that the diamond in the Shah's ring is one of the very valuable fragments taken off the stone during the process of cutting, and which were retained by Governor Pitt.

When Sir Harford Jones took the diamond to Persia, the Shah was under the influence of the French, and he was told that he could not be received. But the Khan, who stopped him, was so overjoyed at the sight of the brilliant, that he swore that Sir Harford should be received "at the heaven-resembling threshold of the Asylum of the World." This diamond-key soon opened the lock.†

The Shah, we believe, did not bring any of these large diamonds with him to Europe, but contented himself

* See *Notes and Queries*, 1st series, IV. 244, 284; 2nd series, III. 325, 402, XI. 442; 3rd series, V. 357.

† We ought to mention the Shah diamond in the Russian collection. Emanuel says (p. 81) that Chosroes, son of Abbas Mirza, presented it to the Emperor of Russia. It is 86 carats in weight, engraved with a Persian inscription, and is perfectly pure.

with less valuable, but very beautiful, gems from his rich collection. He is probably the richest monarch in precious stones in the world. Let us quote Mr. Eastwick's description of a visit to his treasure-chamber :

"We went up a steep stair to a small room, about twenty feet by fourteen, where jewels to the value of six or seven millions were laid out on carpets at the far end of the room. The first thing that struck me was the smallness of the door, and the steepness of the stairs. It was not a nice place to escape from, if one had tried to make off with a crown or two. Near the jewels, on a chair of state, sate the Mustaufiu 'l Mamalik, or Persian Chancellor of the Exchequer, a very fit man to be the keeper of the jewels, enormously rich, close, reserved, bigoted. It was thought a singular proof of Sir Henry Rawlinson's wonderful popularity and influence in Persia that this man came to call upon him; to no other infidel has such a favour been vouchsafed.

"In such a show of gems as seemed to realize the wonders of Aladdin's lamp, the eye was too much dazzled, and the memory too confused for description. But I remember that at the back of all was the Kaianian crown, and on either side of it two Persian lambskin caps, adorned with splendid aigrettes of diamonds. The crown itself was shaped like a flower-pot, with the small end open and the other closed. On the top of the crown was an uncut ruby,* apparently without flaw, as big as

* This is, we suppose, the same gem which excited Chardin's admiration in 1666. He says that the stone had been damaged by cutting the name "Chaic Sophy" into it. This stone probably came, like the finest rubies known, from the mines in Siam. Some so-called rubies of large size have turned out to be only spinels. This was the case with two shown by Her Majesty at the Exhibition of 1862.

a hen's egg. In front of the crown were dresses covered with diamonds and pearls, trays with necklaces of pearls, rubies, and emeralds, and some hundreds of diamond, ruby, and turquoise rings.

"In front of these, again, were gauntlets and belts covered with pearls and diamonds, and conspicuous among them the Kaianian belt, about a foot deep, weighing, perhaps, 18 lbs., and one complete mass of pearls, diamonds, emeralds, and rubies. One or two scabbards of swords are said to be worth a quarter of a million each. . . . There is also the finest turquoise in the world, three or four inches long, and without a flaw, and I remarked a smaller one of unique beauty, three-quarters of an inch long, and three-eighths of an inch broad; the colour was lovely, and almost as refreshing to the eyes as Persian poets pretend.

"There are also many sapphires as big as marbles, and rubies and pearls the size of nuts; and I am certain that I counted nearly a hundred emeralds from half an inch square to one and three-quarter inches long, and an inch broad. In the sword scabbard, which is covered with diamonds, there is not, perhaps, a single stone smaller than the nail of a man's little finger. Lastly, there is an emerald as big as a walnut, covered with the names of kings who had possessed it."

But the Persian stone *par excellence* is the turquoise. From the most ancient times the finest examples came from this country. The ancient Greeks admired the gold armour of the Persians, sumptuously decorated with this gem. Persian lapidaries are now very expert in inlaying the stone with designs and inscriptions, with

very good effect. They often, however, employ the method to hide the defects of an otherwise fine stone. The best specimens come from Nishapour, in Khorassan, and the mines there have been worked from the remotest antiquity.*

The stones that astonished Chardin † in the Treasury at Ispahan came from that place. He saw "in each chamber the stones in the rough, piled high on the floor like heaps of grain, and the polished, filling innumerable leather bags, weighing 45 to 50 lbs. each,"

* The following extract from M. A. Chodsko's paper on these mines, in the *Revue d'Orient*, we take from Ferrier's *Caravan Journeys*, 1856, p. 106:—"These celebrated mines are near the village of Madene, and the only ones known in the world. This village is about thirty-two English miles from Nishapoor. . . . The turquoises are divided into two classes, according to the positions in which they are found. The first, called *sengui*, or stony, are those which are encrusted in the matrix, and which must be removed by a blow of the pick or hammer; the second are found in washing the alluvial deposits, and are called *khaki*, or earthy. The former are of a deep blue; the latter, though larger, from being paler and spotted with white, are of less value. If we are to believe the miners, no turquoises have been found except in this group of rocks. The Persian Government never makes any explorations on its own account, and is content to lease the mines at an annual rent of five hundred tomans. I understood that the most valuable stones are found amongst the *débris* of the old workings and at the bottom of shafts long since abandoned. Having given a *largesse* to the miners, to strike a few blows with their picks in honour of the happy planet of the traveller, we were permitted to enter the first of these mines to witness the operations. These were simple enough; the mattock was the only instrument, but it was very skilfully used, and when a layer of rock was detached, great precautions were taken to remove it without disturbing the turquoises which might be met with. These are not found in the hollow of an eagle-stone like the amethyst, but are seen as if incrustated or glued in the matrix to the number of from twenty-five to thirty, and more or less near one another."

† Chardin's remarks on what he saw at Persia are the more valuable because he, the son of a jeweller, was brought up by his father to the trade. He came to England in 1681, and became court jeweller to Charles II.

for, as with the King of Siam and his rubies, it has always been the custom for all the best stones to be taken to the Shah. Mr. Emanuel says that great quantities of stones (stuck upon wax sticks) are taken by Persian and Tartar merchants to the great fair of Nishni-Novgorod, in Russia, and this has given rise to an erroneous statement, that the stone is found in Russia.

One word with regard to the great size of the emeralds mentioned in the interesting extract we have given from Mr. Eastwick's work. Such large stones are not very rare, and are generally very much flawed. There is a crystal in the Austrian treasury said to weigh 2000 carats, and the Duke of Devonshire has one which measures two inches long, and weighs between eight and nine ounces.* This is surpassed by a magnificent stone in the possession of Dhuleep Singh, which is three inches long, two wide, and half an inch thick. The ancient Persians were always fond of emeralds, and prized those most which came from Egypt, or from countries under the dominion of that land. Their goblets, decorated with these stones, were copied by the Romans. The Shah has a pearl valued at £60,000.†

As might be supposed, the Shah has many talismans. He brought about two hundred of them to Europe. A five-pointed star, supposed to have been worn by Rustem, called Merzoum, is believed to make conspirators instantly confess their crimes. To test its efficacy, it was shown to the Shah's brother, who was accused of treason some

* We believe this came from the Muzo mine, near Santa Fè de Bogota, in New Granada.

† *Treatise on Diamonds and Pearls*, by David Jeffries, 1871, p. 76.

time ago. He immediately confessed his fault, and implored mercy! Around his neck the Shah wore a cube of amber, reported to have fallen from heaven in the time of Mohammed, and which possesses the property of rendering him invulnerable.*

He has also a little casket of gold, studded with emeralds, which was blessed by the same prophet, and is said to have the remarkable property of rendering the royal wearer invisible as long as he remains celibate. It would be difficult to say of what use it could be to the Shah. A diamond set in a scimitar and a dagger† render him invincible, and thus preternaturally armed the Persian monarch doubtless left his shores for Europe with a confidence he would not otherwise have possessed.‡

* *Art Journal*, October, 1873, p. 297.

† The utility of the dagger is somewhat reduced by the quality that those who use it shall perish by it! To guard against such a contingency it is kept in a sandal-wood casket.

‡ For an account of the *ambar-khoneh*, or storehouse of curiosities, see Binning, II. 230.

CHAPTER XVI.

Coal-fields—Irrigation—Small Rainfall—*Kanāts* used to Irrigate—Population—Condition of Peasantry—Production of Silk—Revenue—Taxation—Telegraphs—Postal Arrangements.

WE propose devoting the concluding chapter of our work to a brief description of the resources and prospects of Persia, thus supplementing the remarks we have before made under these heads.

Two cheering facts may be mentioned at the outset: the existence of coal-fields in the country, and its extreme fertility under cultivation, assisted by irrigation. Dr. Tietze, of the Imperial Mining School, sent out by Baron Reuter for geological research, reported the existence of extensive coal-fields near Kasvin.* Colonel Baker and Lieutenant Gill recently found unworked coal seams and iron in the mountains.†

Travellers agree in noting the great productiveness of the soil when well watered. Mr. Binning, for example, observes that “the hard, burnt soil generally requires nothing but irrigation to render it green and fertile; the most barren ground when moistened with a plentiful supply

* Telegram in *Daily News*, Jan. 9, 1874.

† Times, Nov. 28, 1873.

of the precious element becomes productive and fruitful with a rapidity almost miraculous." * This valuable quality induced Sir John Malcolm to write : " Nature has been so bountiful to this country, in climate, soil, and in every animal and vegetable production, that man, spoilt as he is by her indulgence, cannot, without great and continued efforts, destroy the blessings by which he is surrounded." †

Unfortunately for Persia, very little rain falls in the low-lying districts of the country, and hence the immense importance of storing the valuable hill supply for use in the plains. Sir. R. Alcock is of opinion that, if this were done, the whole surface of the land might be rendered fruitful, ‡ and play the same part as the Zarafshan (or gold scatterer) in the rich cultivation of Bokhara. Sir F. G. Goldsmid, whose recent travels in Persia have supplied geographers with valuable facts relating to little-known districts, and Mr. W. T. Blandford—at the same meeting—pointed out how much Persia needed an effective system of irrigation. The latter thought that there has been a very gradual decrease in the rainfall of Persia from a long time antecedent to the historical period, accompanied by a rise of land in Southern Persia, which converted the existing valleys into lakes—the water in the streams being no longer sufficient to cut a passage to the sea. The lakes then gradually dried up, and the rainfall, still decreasing, was at length insufficient to wash the *detritus* from the mountains to the lower portions of the plains, and only sufficient to

* *Two Years in Persia, &c.*, II. 171.

† *Sketches of Persia*, I. 97.

‡ Address to the geographical section of the British Association at Bradford in Sept. 1873.

arrange it in long slopes at the base of the hills.* To the moister climate, which may have prevailed, even in historical times, we may perhaps attribute the larger population, which, in all probability, inhabited Persia in the days when Parthia was able to withstand all the power of Rome.

In many plains dry well-mouths, extending for miles in a straight direction, attract the attention of the traveller. These are the remains of the *kanāts*, or subterranean channels, used to water the country in former times. As the same system is employed now in the more populous districts, we will describe one of these. The method employed is the same in the large *kanāt*, formed as an act of piety by the noble or merchant, and in that dug by the humble peasant. A spring is first found, probably on a hillside, and converted into a well. At a convenient distance from this another well is dug, and the water from the former one conducted to it by a subterranean channel. It will be easily seen that by means of a properly constructed series of these wells and channels the precious fluid may be conducted considerable distances.

It will readily be seen that such a method of irrigation can only be carried out in well-populated parts of the country, and this naturally brings us to consider the condition of Persia in that respect. The large tracts of desert† will always prevent its being a thickly populated country. The sparseness of the inhabitants is strikingly brought out by the fact that, while England has on the average three

* The want of any river of importance in the interior, and the relatively small extent of coast, are considerable drawbacks to the future development of the country.

† The existence of elevated pasture grounds, which cannot be regularly cultivated, will prevent the suppression of the nomadic tribes.

hundred and ten persons to the square mile, Persia has but *seven*. After allowing for the ravages of the famine of 1871-2, it is probable that at the present time Persia does not contain more than four millions of inhabitants.* Although in the seventeenth century it was more thickly populated, the forty millions given by Chardin must be a great exaggeration. At present there is only one city (Tabreez) with 100,000 inhabitants. The capital has 85,000, and Meshed comes next, with 70,000. We have elsewhere mentioned that a census is unknown.

The Persian peasantry are generally contented and happy, notwithstanding the extortions to which they are subjected by local magistrates and the agents of the government. Like the French peasantry, they are very industrious, and under a more enlightened rule would play an important part in the development of the country. As we have before observed, the sufferings of this class were very great in the recent famine, and the long-continued droughts, which occasioned it, have had a most baneful influence upon agricultural produce of all kinds.

The most important industry that needs improvement is the production of silk. The silkworm disease, which appeared in 1864, was a great blow to the rearing of that insect. In the succeeding year the silk crop was reduced by two-thirds. Considerable quantities of eggs were procured from Japan and other places, but those from Khorassan proved to be the best. So important was this industry, that the revenue has been most seriously reduced by this circumstance.

The total revenue is under two millions, including pay-

* One million of these are in the towns and villages.

ments in kind. Each province pays its expenses, and hands the balance to the authorities at the capital. The revenue has increased £700,000 per annum during the reign of the present Shah. So large a proportion of the taxes finds its way into the pockets of provincial governors and other officials, that it is probable the returns will be greatly increased when Baron Reuter organizes a more effective system of collection.

Taxation falls almost entirely on those little able to bear it. The great nobles and wealthy merchants pay nothing into the public exchequer; the taxes are extorted from the peasants, shopkeepers, and artificers. The two latter classes pay twenty per cent. of their earnings; the former, twenty-five per cent.

Though there is good telegraphic communication in Persia, the establishment of a postal service on the European method is urgently required. Letters from Europe are taken into the interior of the country by the carriers attached to the various embassies, who leave Trebizonde every week.* The journey from that place to the capital (900 miles) is accomplished in from ten to twelve days. Small parcels are also carried in this manner.†

* Postage of letters destined to go in this way must be paid to Trebizonde, and the letter thus addressed: "*M. — à — en Perse, via Trébisonde, aux soins obligeants de l'Ambassade de S. M. Britannique.*" If letters are required to be sent by way of Russia, "*via Odessa et Tiflis*" must be placed on them; and also "*aux soins obligeants du Consulat Russe à Tabreez.*" (*Special Catalog der Ausstellung des Persischen Reiches*, 21, 22.)

† For further account of Persian progress, see Appendix H, containing an extract from a paper on modern Persia in the *Oriental*, July, 1873.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

THE results of the Persian expedition against Greece are well described by the Comte de Gobineau, in *Histoire des Perses*, II. 219, 220.

“ En résumé, la bataille de Platée se présente comme une de ces actions de guerre si nombreuses dans l'histoire, qui ont été considérables par le prix du moment où elles ont eu lieu, mais qui pourtant ne font honneur à personne. L'armée perse, mécontente et inquiète, se sentant entourée d'auxiliaires perfides ou lâches, n'avait pas confiance en elle-même. L'armée grecque, en fuite de deux côtés, était en voie de se dissoudre. Le général en chef Pausanias y était mal obéi, et par conséquent ne pouvait prendre aucune mesure. La circonstance que les Tégéates, désespérant de leur salut, prirent spontanément le parti de se défendre plutôt que de se laisser tuer, et entraînèrent ainsi fortuitement la masse d'infanterie pesante dans laquelle ils étaient agglomérés, l'infidélité d'Artabaze, celle des auxiliaires macédoniens, béotiens et autres, qui paralysèrent l'action des Perses, ce furent là les causes tout accidentelles de l'événement de la journée. Quant à la gloire, la forfanterie grecque en décida plus tard.

“ Les résultats d'une expedition mal conçue dans sons principe et mal exécutée se firent sentir vivement aux Perses. Les alliés hellènes montrèrent leurs navires sur la côte d'Ionie, et con-

spirant contre les Samiens, se risquèrent à livrer bataille au corps d'observation laissé par Xerxès près du promontoire de Mycale. Trahis par les Ioniens, les Perses virent forcer l'estacade à l'abri de laquelle ils avaient cru pouvoir défendre leurs forces navales, et ils subirent une défaite complète. L'Ionie se révolta de nouveau. Mais personne d'entre les Grecs ne s'y trompa : cette insurrection n'avait aucune chance de succès, et le conseil de guerre des vainqueurs de Mycale agita la question de savoir si les Ioniens ne feraient pas bien d'abandonner leur pays voué à l'obéissance des Perses. Les Lacédémoniens é mirent l'opinion qu'il fallait amener ces insurgés dans l'Hellade et leur donner les villes et les terres des nations qui avaient suivi la cause de l'Achéménide.

“ Mais les Athéniens se méfièrent de cette proposition, soutinrent qu'il n'appartenait pas à ceux de Sparte de se mêler de l'avenir des Ioniens, colons d'Athènes, et voulurent qu'à tout risque rien ne fût changé à l'état des choses. On se contenta de recevoir officiellement dans l'alliance hellénique les habitants de quelques îles, ceux de Samos, de Chios, et de Lesbos. Le reste, on l'abandonna au hasard. Les méfiances, les jalousies, les mauvais procédés, qui n'avaient jamais cessé entre les alliés, même en présence des dangers les plus menaçants, avaient plus de force que jamais, et il n'était qu'un point sur lequel on s'entendit : c'était le châtiment à infliger aux Grecs partisans des Perses. On fut unanime pour ne leur épargner ni les exactions ni les cruautés, et là se trouve une des raisons principales qui maintint l'influence médique extrêmement puissante dans toute l'Hellade après comme avant la guerre.”

APPENDIX B.

THE following remarks respecting Perseopolis we take from *Histoire de Perses*, by the Comte de Gobineau, II. 391, 392.

“ Persépolis était une ville considérable. Il est impossible de savoir même approximativement quel pouvait être à cette époque

son étendue, bien que, lorsque du haut de la terrasse des palais en ruine on considère aujourd'hui la campagne, la quantité des tumulus se multipliant jusqu'au delà de la portée de la vue dans toutes les directions, et contenant les débris des habitations, donne la certitude que peu de villes out eu dans le monde un plus vaste contour. Mais une partie de ces constructions ont certainement appartenu à l'époque sassanide, et on ne saurait avoir aucun doute que dans ces temps plus rapprochés de nous, et même à l'époque musulmane, Persépolis, appelée par les gens du pays Istakhar, c'est-à-dire la ville par excellence et même la ville forte, n'eût été encore d'une grande splendeur. Des sculptures sassanides fort belles et curieusement taillées dans le rocher sur lequel est fondée la droite des palais en sont une preuve convaincante, et pendant le séjour que j'ai fait sur ce site imposant, des paysans m'ont apporté une pierre gravée trouvée à l'instant au milieu des décombres et appartenant au temps des successeurs d'Ar-deshyr-Babeghan, peut-être au règne de ce prince lui-même. Cette observation est intéressante en ce qu'elle amène la discussion sur un fait tres-reproché à Alexandre : l'incendie des palais de Persépolis et le sac de la ville, ordonné contre l'avis de Parménion. Diodore et Quinte-Curce, Plutarque apres eux, ont renchéri à l'envi sur les horreurs de cette catastrophe. Toute la population mâle massacrée, les femmes et les enfants réduits en servitude, un pillage féroce, une dilapidation sans bornes, un trésor de six cent quatre-vingt-dix millions de francs réservé au roi, qui livra le reste à la soldatesque gorgée d'or et de choses précieuses, des courtisanes mettant elles-mêmes le feu au palais dans les transports d'une ivresse furieuse, rien n'a été épargné pour rendre la scène digne des excès d'un homme qui, pour la postérité, a dû nécessairement être incomparable dans tout ce qu'il a fait, le mal comme le bien."

APPENDIX C.

THE interest of the following remarks must be our excuse for a third quotation from the Comte de Gobineau's valuable work. This passage on the effect of the conquest of Alexander the Great upon Persia will be found in *Histoire des Perses*, II. 467, 468.

“L'empire perse avait atteint sous Alexandre le plus grand développement territorial qu'il ait jamais obtenu. Il s'étendait depuis la vallée de Kachmyr et le cours du Soutledje d'une part, jusqu'à l'extrémité du Péloponnèse et au désert libyen de l'autre, confinait aux nations scythes du nord de la Caspienne et aux peuples riverains du Danube; il bordait aussi, depuis l'embouchure de l'Indus, les côtes de l'Océan, celles de la mer Persique et l'extrémité nord de la mer Rouge. C'était beaucoup; mais pour peu que l'on ait suivi avec attention la marche de cette histoire, ce n'était que la conséquence logique du rôle joué par l'Iran dans les affaires du monde. Alexandre n'avait fait que réaliser ce qui devait nécessairement se produire; il avait servi et non pas forcé la nature des événements.

“Dans l'immense extension de la sixième formation de l'empire, on peut observer sans doute que les habitants des points extrêmes présentent entre eux des différences assez fortes. Le citoyen d'Argos et l'homme de l'Hindou-Koush n'ont pas beaucoup plus de rapports ni de ressemblance que le cavalier des bords du Danube et l'Orite du Beloutjistan. Cependant des nuances intermédiaires insensibles s'étendent de l'un à l'autre et les rapprochent à leur insu. La civilisation sémitique s'est accordée d'une part avec l'esprit iranien auquel elle a beaucoup prêté, de l'autre avec l'esprit grec qu'elle a formé et élevé. Par le premier, elle est venue en contact avec les notions indiennes; par le second, elle a gardé la possibilité de s'intéresser aux œuvres intellectuelles de l'Hellade, et les rapports politiques devenant chaque jour plus étroits sous les Achéménides, pour arriver sous Alexandre à s'unifier, il est arrivé que dans ce vaste État tous les hommes doués de quelque ouverture d'esprit ont eu à la fois dans leur cerveau des

ineurs de ce qui se pensait sur l'Indus et de ce qui s'enseignait sur les rives du Céphise, avec toutes les variantes intermédiaires.

“L'empire s'est trouvé ainsi représenter un milieu très favorable à la communication et à la propagation des idées. On évoque assez exactement les personnalités des innombrables éclectiques qui devaient l'habiter.”

APPENDIX D.

THE RUSSIAN MASSACRE.

WE transcribe the following passages in a letter from the Shah to his son Abbas Mirza, given in Fowler's *Three Years in Persia*, I. 212—219.

“Two women, from the Court of *Moosh*, who had formerly been prisoners and had fallen into the hands of the general, were demanded by the ambassador, under the pretence that they were persons of Kirklesia, notwithstanding the inspectors had inquired and knew perfectly well that they were not so. Yet as the ambassador desired to inquire personally, we, in order to comply with his wishes, commanded that the two women should be taken to the ambassador, that he might do so and send them back again. They were taken. He inquired and knew that they were not Russian subjects, and yet he would not send them back, and kept them for a pledge for some uncertain prisoners, which he claimed. However much he was desired to send back these women, who for many years were Moslems—and whenever we know of any prisoners whom you mention, we will send them to you—this was no use. The complaint and lamentation of the women, who were highly displeased and dishonoured, being in his house, reached the hearing of the people, and became the means of increasing the tumult, yet, from the fear of the punishment of His Majesty, no one showed any boldness in it. It happened that on the night of the same day of the transaction some of the people of the ambassador had seized a woman in the street and had carried her off violently; and had insulted the

same day one of the *syeds* at the public bazaars, beyond everything.

“On the following morning the lower orders, and the rest of the community in a mob, washing their hands with their souls, with the intention of bringing out the women from the house of the ambassador, unexpectedly attacked his house, and on the other hand the people of the ambassador and his guards opposing the people, they killed four or five Mussulmen with the blows of the musket balls, and wounded several. The people on seeing the bodies of the wounded would not be pacified by anything, nor listen to their moollahs, and the very children of the town, who were the leaders of the ignorant, with clubs and stones in their hands, ascended the roof and gate of the ambassador's house, and attacked the soldiers of the ambassador, and amongst them were some of your servants, Sulyman, the nephew of Eich Akasi, and others who, by command of His Majesty, had carried a message to the ambassador from his uncle concerning the settlement of the affair in question. By some fatal accident a blow reached the Elchee himself, who was killed, and this disgrace was brought upon our Government. At first, when the report was brought to His Majesty, the children of the Prince Zelli Sultaun, my chief guard, with the cavalry of the guards, and the rest of my servants then at the Court, were sent for the prevention of this disturbance, but the excitement of the mob was to such a degree that they could not quell it. Moreover, the lower orders in this revolution insulted and abused Zelli Sultaun himself, and at last the uproar of the mob extended so far that the gates of the palace were closed, but the soldiers of the guard and the servants of Zelli Sultaun were able to do so far as to save, with the greatest difficulty, the First Secretary and three others of the ambassador's servants. His Majesty is puzzled why, and astonished that, notwithstanding the willingness which our mind cultivated between the treaty of these two governments, these wonderful things should happen, and particularly such as never happened before in this Government. The uproar of the mob and the revolution of the ignorant people have never had any connection with the Government.

"Now and then the news would reach us from other Governments that the people had set up some revolution, having done so and so, dismissing some minister, or changing the Government. We are always surprised and astonished to hear how the affairs of sovereignty may be carried on with these difficulties. In those days when Haji Khalib Khan, ambassador from this Government, was killed in India by some accident of this sort, we would not believe at first that it was not done intentionally, till we experienced the kindness of the English Government, and beheld the firmness of their promise and contract. Then we became assured the accident happened providentially, not intentionally. However, the grief and anxiety which have found their voice to our royal mind will not come into any description by writing, and I need not explain and represent them. We value the friendship and treaty of that Government more than you, my son; but our sorrow is beyond expression at this accident, because the publication of the circumstances will be the cause of disgrace to this Government. Although no sensible man would expect this sort of outrage, yet we deem it necessary that we should inform that son, his excellency Meerza Amburger is there. You must inform him of the truth of this perfectly. We do not consider any difference between these two Governments in regard to our friendship and union. Teheran and St. Petersburg are the same. Let them suppose that this accident has happened in that metropolis, not in this, and whatever they would do in such a case we will do the same, according to any two religions or laws of either Government."

APPENDIX E.

WHAT THE RUSSIANS THOUGHT OF THE SHAH'S RECEPTION.

"The Shah's stay in London elicits the following lively remarks from the St. Petersburg *Mir* :—

"The events of the spring have diverted public attention from Europe for a time. The fashionable topic now-a-days is Asia

Things began with the Khiva expedition being represented in an exaggerated way, and made the subject of the most unjustifiable remarks by the English as well as the Austro-Hungarian Press. After this the publication of the diplomatic correspondence on the matter, the journey of the Shah, and the announcement of the Turkestan Railway project by M. de Lesseps—a gentleman so hateful to “bloody Albion”—added fresh fuel to the flames, and gave the question an altogether unexpected importance. Naturally enough, the Russian Press, being directly interested in the business, attended to it most earnestly, and some of the leaders published at Moscow and St. Petersburg during the visit of the Shah were almost entirely transmitted to London by telegraph. With the Shah’s departure the interest in Asiatic affairs declined, but it is greater than ever in England now that he has gone there.

“The English journals, Ministers, and Parliament are endeavouring to give the Shah a brilliant reception. Money is no object, and the cuirassed squadron is being equipped to welcome him to the British shores. Even the Queen, notwithstanding her delicate health, leaves her usual residence at Balmoral and comes to London to greet the Shah. In a word, proud Albion is doing all she can to astonish the Shah by the pomp and luxury of the reception which she has determined to give him; and all this only in order to outdo Russia and to efface from his mind the pleasing reminiscences he took with him from St. Petersburg. From the naïve language of the English papers, it is clear that in all the festivities in honour of the Shah England is showing her spite against Russia rather than her friendship for Persia. But, notwithstanding this, the English papers do not scruple to tender the Shah the most ardent assurances of eternal friendship, promising him the support and assistance of the English people, if he will only undertake to civilize his people with the assistance of the Western powers, in which case he is to be accorded protection from the voracious appetite of his Northern neighbour.

“Of course, allusions to the fate of Hanjee, Shirvan, and

Erivan gracefully mingle with these siren songs of the British tiger, who, it would appear, is intent upon making a moral conquest of the travelling ruler of Iran. But however flattering all this gushing language may appear to the Persians, it is impossible not to perceive that these obtrusive assurances are in reality anything but complimentary to the Shah and the statesmen of his suite. If the Persian travellers are to believe the English, they must be supposed ignorant of all which has occurred in India and the ancient dependencies of Persia—in Khorassan, Afghanistan, and Beloochistan, now torn from Persia chiefly by the intrigues and corrupt practices of Great Britain. In Europe the English tiger when interceding in favour of Poland may succeed in being considered a human animal by some incorrigible simpletons; but has Persia already forgotten the sanguinary drama of the Mysore, the Mahratta War, and the general rebellion excited by English policy and sustained by English gold to supply an opportunity for the plunder of the Indian Princes?

“Do the English really imagine that the Persians have forgotten to whom they owe the failure of their endeavours to recover those two pillars of their independence, Herat and Cabul? Or do the English indulge in the illusion that Persian statesmen are unacquainted with the admission made by Mr. Philip Francis, himself an English writer, that wherever in India or on her borders the English found no willing enemy they managed to get up an artificial quarrel? Indeed, the armies of Lord Auckland and Lord Ellenborough and their operations in Cabul and Afghanistan must long have persuaded the Persians that on the eastern side of their territory, at any rate, they have nothing to expect from British assistance. Like the sons of Danäus, the English are more terrible to the Persians as friends than as enemies, while Russia, even though she has been compelled to make Persia feel the strength of her arm in open war, nevertheless remains her true friend, and has been steadily so since the misunderstandings which led to hostilities have been removed. In the suite of the Shah there

are enough enlightened statesmen who, amid the siren songs of the English diplomacy and Press, can distinguish the hidden growl of the perfidious and cruel tiger, and who, notwithstanding the thunder of the English ironclads at Ostend, are well aware that England is powerless to defend the north-western frontiers of her Indian possessions.

“Nor can it be unknown to the Persian statesmen that the unprecedented cruelties and the fearful treachery which drowned in a sea of blood the great and national rebellion of India in 1857, have left in the minds of the Mussulman population an insatiable thirst for revenge, and that the people of Afghanistan, separated against their will from Persia, remember to this day their relationship with the inhabitants of Iran. We must also say that Turkey, who has accepted the protection of the Western Powers, has hardly fared sufficiently well to induce anybody else, least of all any dependent State like Persia, to go and do likewise. However much the English may endeavour to deceive the Shah as to the value of what he has lost by their intrigues and roguery on his southern and eastern frontiers; however ardently they may desire to irritate him against Russia, Persia has made sufficient advances in the art of politics, without the assistance of English civilizers, to be able to discern her interests with her own eyes, and not to look at them through foreign spectacles, as does Turkey. She knows perfectly well that she has lost Shirvan and Erivan through her own fault and for ever; but she will never cease to regard Herat and Cabul, Afghanistan, Beloochistan, and Bagdad as the natural frontiers of her empire, as the inalienable conditions of her existence and vitality, the recovery of which is a mere question of time.

“That the English themselves admit the necessity of Persia recovering her natural frontiers of the Tigris, Indus, and the Persian Gulf is proved by the half-comical, half-desperate effort they are making morally to conquer the Shah. All this receives additional importance from the railway question mooted by M. de Lesseps. It is well known that to avoid the almost unconquerable obstacles of the Hindukush and Himalaya, the

Orenburg-Indian line will have to decline from its straight course, and, striking west, pass through Persia. As yet the English flatter themselves that the line is impossible; but they said as much of the Suez Canal, and the name of M. de Lesseps is a guarantee that the work will be taken in hand steadily, energetically, and scientifically. As to the money, the rapidity with which the five milliards are being paid by the Paris Government shows clearly that the French, who knew how to complete the Suez Canal without English aid, will, in the present instance too, be able to get on independently of British help.'

"The journal in which the above appears is one of the great daily papers of the Russian capital, and a vigorous advocate of the foreign politics attributed to the national party. Articles similar in spirit, though more moderate in tone, have recently appeared in many of the metropolitan organs, including even some of comparatively Conservative politics. Ever since England asked for the definition of the Afghan frontier the Russian Press have found it impossible to restrain their feelings."—*From our Prussian Correspondent: The Times, June 24th, 1873.*

APPENDIX F.

MR. MOUNSEY, in *Journey through the Caucasus*, etc., gives an account (pp. 164, 165) of a state reception by the Shah. The following is an extract.

"A few steps more, and we entered the presence chamber, a moderately-sized saloon, on three sides of which the walls were covered with paintings of birds and flowers—the loves of nightingale and rose—on blue ground; the fourth was occupied by a window, filled with carved wood and painted glass, looking on to the court, and now open. The ceiling was vaulted and honeycombed, and glittered with gilding, alternated with small pieces of mirror-glass. In the centre of the room, which was richly carpeted, played a rock-crystal fountain, a present from the Empress Catherine to a former Shah; and around it stood

eighteen solidly gilded chairs. Near the window was a throne of sandal-wood, thickly studded with large emeralds, and most incongruously cushioned with Manchester chintz; close to it, on a carpet sewn with pearls, stood Nasreddeen Shah.

"He was then thirty-six years of age; he is a little above the average height, well proportioned, and has regular features, though his forehead is rather low, and his nose somewhat too prominent. His eyes are dark and overhung by thick black eyebrows, which give them a mistrustful expression. He wears a moustache and closely-cropped beard. Altogether he is a handsome man, and the magnificence of his dress added not a little to his appearance.

"In his hat he wore an aigrette, the distinctive emblem of royalty, of diamonds and rubies; his tunic, cut square and descending to his knees, was a blaze of brilliants and pearls, and in his belt, from which hung a jewelled sword and scabbard, glittered the Darya-noor, or sea of light, a sister diamond of our Koh-i-noor. White trousers and socks completed his costume. At his feet lay another of the royal insignia, a large sceptre, completely studded over with precious stones. By the side of all these treasures, a pair of common cotton gloves of an ugly brown colour, over which he wore several sapphire and turquoise rings, looked as incongruous as the Manchester chintz."

The same author (pp. 139, 140) describes the Shah's fondness for practical jokes, observing that he "took such a fancy to a portable india-rubber boat, that its owner, one of our officers, who had got it out from England, with a view to exploring some of the rivers, begged, and of course obtained permission, to present it to him. It was at once transported to the palace, and when inflated, my friend had the honour of paddling royalty about on one of the tanks. The amusement pleased His Majesty, and he took to paddling himself, the courtiers followed suit, and eventually the king caused a throne to be erected near the tank, in order that he might at his ease watch their progress in this new accomplishment. It was probably too slow to afford him satisfaction, for one day he announced that he should like to see

how many persons his boat was capable of carrying. Three could sit comfortably in it, but there was room for a dozen, and accordingly a dozen aide-de-camps and chamberlains, in their handsome shawl dresses and gold brocade, stepped in. Meanwhile, some one in the royal confidence had secretly opened the valves.

"The boat was pushed off towards the middle of the tank, and as the air escaped, gradually sank lower and lower, and finally disappeared with its gorgeous and unsuspecting freight in the water. For a moment there was nothing visible on the surface of the tank but lambswool hats and linen skull-caps; for a moment, too, there was silence. Then a dozen shaven heads were seen wagging their tufts and side-locks, and a dozen mouths and noses were heard puffing, blowing, and snorting as their owners struggled slowly to the side. The Shah laughed long and loudly, and was so much pleased with the success of his stratagem, that when his victims emerged, all dripping and draggled from their bath, he deigned to inquire, 'What news of the fish?' Persians can take a joke as it is meant; and though the courtiers no doubt wished the boat and its donor a speedy descent to a warmer climate, I dare say they all ultimately joined in their sovereign's laughter."

APPENDIX G.

RELIGION OF ZOROASTER.

"FOR many centuries the pure religion of Zoroaster prevailed, or held its own against Buddhism and Magism, and in the Behistún Inscriptions, which were carved, on a rock near Hamadan, by order of Darius, probably a thousand years after the death of the great reformer, there is still no sign of any worship of the elements, but only a worship of one Supreme Being, with occasional mention of an evil spirit. But the religion described by Herodotus is elemental, the Magi worshipped Mithra and Homa (sun and moon), and thus a more corrupt belief appears to have existed in ancient Persia, by the side of the elevated

ritual of the followers of Zoroaster. The upholders of Zoroaster's creed appear even to have been in a minority at one time. Buddhism was embraced by King Lohrasp, at Balkh, while the elemental religion of the masses made head against the pure worship of the advanced thinkers. Hence the unsuccessful attempt of the Magi on the death of Cambyses, a full account of which is given on the Behistún Inscriptions, as well as in the pages of Herodotus.

"This antagonism in ancient Persia, between the elemental worship of the Magi, and worship resembling that of the Vedas, and the pure religion of Zoroaster, explains many points which would otherwise be obscure in this portion of ancient history. The errors which had thus either crept into the Persian religion, or were allowed to exist side by side with it, are possibly referred to in the Book of Isaiah, where Cyrus is emphatically reminded of the doctrines of the Gathas. It was not until after the canon of the Zend Avesta was complete that the ancient Persians, the Aryan monotheists, came in contact with the Jewish people, the Semitic monotheists, during the captivity of the latter in Babylon, but before the Persian conquest of Babylon, for Jeremiah mentions the chief of the Magi in the retinue of Nebuchadnezzar, B.C. 600.

"Ezekiel also appears to allude to the religion of Persia; and Isaiah speaks of Cyrus as the anointed of the Lord, the shepherd who executes the Lord's decrees, the man appointed by the Lord's counsel, strengthened by the Lord to subdue the heathen. The Jewish people were thus for a long time in very close contact with the Zoroastrians, after the canon of the sacred writings of the latter was closed. Here, then, are the three ancient nations whose sacred books have reached us: the Vedic Aryans, the Zoroastrians, and the Jews; the two former Aryan, and the latter Semitic."—Markham's *General Sketch of the History of Persia*, 64—66.

APPENDIX H.

PERSIAN PROGRESS.

"WHEN the great grandfather of the present Shah ascended the throne, in 1798, his country was exhausted by protracted civil war; one of its largest provinces, Khorassan, still refused to submit to the reigning dynasty, and the once flourishing city of Kerman was in ruins, and its population massacred or dispersed. The roads were everywhere unsafe; hordes of Belooch, Affghan, and Turkoman robbers plundered caravans, and carried off captives in sight of the gates of Ispahan. Foreign trade was depressed and languishing; direct communication with Europe unknown. Arab and Turkoman pirates swept the seas, and harried the shores of the Gulf and the Caspian. The sea-board of the former was in the hands of Arab sheikhs, either wholly independent or professing but a nominal allegiance to the Court of Tehran. Provincial governors were always semi-independent, and often in rebellion. Wheeled carriages were entirely unknown. In short, the country was very much in the condition now attributed to it by unfriendly critics.

"In spite of the many misfortunes she has undergone in the last few years, Persia now wears a very different aspect. In the first place, the central authority at Tehran is firmly established, and far less freedom of action is enjoyed by local authorities. Khorassan, though inclined to turbulence, has been thoroughly subdued for twenty years. The town of Kerman has been rebuilt, and contains forty thousand inhabitants. Life and property, though exposed to danger occasionally, particularly during the late famine, are, as a rule, safe in most parts of the country. The writer can vouch for this from personal experience, having travelled on horseback upwards of twenty-three thousand miles in Persia without mishap, though rarely accompanied by an escort. Highway robberies and murders undoubtedly occur, but, both by reference to travellers of fifty

years ago, and from the accounts of natives themselves, it is certain that security has vastly increased. The incursions of Turkoman man-stealers are now confined to the country in the immediate vicinity of their own deserts. Authority has been gradually regained over the coast of the Persian Gulf, but not without considerable opposition from the Indian Government, who long seemed to suppose it to be in the interests of British trade that the ports should remain smuggling depôts in the hands of Muscat and other Arabs. The necessity which impels a strong Government to annex weaker but turbulent neighbours, more than any suggestions of Russia, has compelled Persia to take forcible possession of Western Beloochistan, which, from a nest of cut-throats, is becoming one of the most orderly provinces of the kingdom.

“The absence of facilities for internal communication is the fault most commonly attributed to Persia, and sneers are levelled at her for attempting to construct railways before there is a single made road in the country; yet this is exactly what Americans are doing in the United States, and we ourselves in India, where there was not a carriageable road of any length fifty years ago, and where no system of communication by relays of horses was in use till years after such had been established in despised Persia. Even in the matter of road-making Persians have not been entirely idle, though, thanks to the superior astuteness of Russian diplomatic agents to our own, their efforts have hitherto been confined to the north. The frightful morass which separated Resht, the main centre of the silk trade, from the sea, has been recently bridged by a good macadamized causeway, and the road thence to Tehran, and from that city to Bagdad, much improved. A *chaussée* from the capital to the summer residence of the Shah has long been in existence; others have been lately constructed round the capital, and at present no wealthy resident at the Court thinks his establishment complete without one or more carriages. Wheeled vehicles, indeed, are not only used to carry passengers, but commonly for goods, in the neighbourhood of the city, and large waggons, carrying

pilgrims, regularly ply between Tehran and Koom, a holy city, ninety miles distant. The Shah, and many provincial governors, always use carriages for the conveyance of themselves and their harems when on a journey. Except in crossing the mountain barrier which shuts off Persia from the sea, the country is everywhere passable for artillery and light-wheeled traffic, and very slight improvement will make it practicable for heavy carts.

“But it is in commerce that Persia has made the greatest stride since the beginning of the century, notwithstanding that the silkworm disease has, for the last seven years, caused a lamentable decrease in the staple export, and that the recent fearful famine has, for the present, sadly crippled her resources.

“The general improvement is clearly shown by the changes that the last dozen years have wrought in the carrying trade to and from her shores. That time has witnessed the establishment of mail steamers from Bombay, first every six weeks, then monthly, now for several years fortnightly; and soon, we believe, to be run every week. The opening of the Suez Canal has caused the direct trade between England and the Gulf ports to increase largely, and several steamers now take cargo from London to Bander Abbas, Bushire, and Bassorah. On the Caspian the change is even more remarkable. Not many years since a long and tedious journey through the Caucasus, or Armenia, was the only way of reaching Tehran from Europe. The railway will now deposit the traveller at Tsaritsin, on the banks of the Volga, six days after leaving London. River steamers will take him thence to Astrakhan in twenty-four hours, and six days more, passed in a comfortable steamer on the Caspian, will see him at Resht, only two hundred miles from Tehran. Nearly thirty screw vessels are now regularly employed between the Russian and Persian ports, and the number is yearly increasing. Two successive good harvests have refilled the granaries, emptied during the famine, and the export of corn from the south will soon be resumed. Persian opium, unknown in China half-a-dozen years ago, is now sold at the rate of 1500 chests a-year,

and the export duty imposed on it being small, the production is rapidly increasing. The silk crop is yearly improving, though it has not yet attained the amount it reached before the appearance of the disease."—*The Oriental*, July, 1873.

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